

TO BELGIUM AND HOLLAND

Via. U. K. & U. S. A.



Mar Aprem with Bishop Mar Daniel and Archdeacon
shai Joseph, Deacon Benyamin and members of the
Committee. First from the left is Mr. Bahram (Bob)
Behrami (former President) and the second Mr. Mike
Turto, Present President of the Church Committee.

MAR APREM

BOOKS BY MAR APREM

1. Mar Thoma Darmo—A Biography pp. 214, 1974
2. Mar Abimalek Thimotheus-A Biography pp. 282, 1975
3. Nestorian Fathers pp. 168, 1976
4. Nestorian Missions pp. 134, 1976
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24. ക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ കാൽപ്പാടുകളിലൂടെ pp. 168, 1985
25. From Bagdad to Chicago pp. 168, 1985
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31. To Belgium and Holland pp. 124, 1989

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AND HOLLAND**

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MAR APREM

1989

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Via U. K. & U. S. A.

(A Travelogue)

(English)

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Detailed Outline

Chapter I Sixth Visit to England

Hurried departure. Via Amsterdam. Arrival in London. Baggage not come. Sitar arrives without keys. Chemmani brothers. Cousin James. Visiting Susheela and family. Visiting family of Jose Thaikadan. Dr. Leonard Henderson. Dr. Joe Philips. Thomas. Dr. O. R. Timothy. Aprem de Kelaita. Yathron Darmo & Emmanue Kelaita, Archdeacon Yonen Youvil. Lambeth Conference, women as bishops. Fr. Oppenheimer of New Zealand.

Chapter II California

Departure from London. Susie Eshaya. 9 hour non-stop flight from Amsterdam. Arrival in Los Angeles. Brother Jose Mookan in San Diego. Visit to Dr. Varghese's home. Malayalees get-together. Kerala food. Playing sitar. Buying clothe for Cassock. No time for sight seeing. Journey to Hollywood. Arrival at Turlock. St. Mary's Church in Hughson. Bishop Mar Daniel. Staying with Yacob S. Yacob. Shirin Yosip Kallu, the oldest lady in America. Sunda Qurbana, Reception.

Yosemeti Park. Interview on Assyrian T.V. Mrs. Christina De Kelaita. Drive to San Francisco airport. Rushing to check-in. VUSA ticket. Domestic flight. Smoke free environment. Recent Russian traveller on California. Indian in America.

Chapter III Minneapolis

Polly Reuling, Unny Mary, Alice. Afraid of Indians. Stroll along Mississippi River. Sitar concert at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral. Sat like Ravi Shankar. Spoke about the history of our Church. Twenty five years sitar player. Gorden Namboodiripad took video. Visit to Dr. Akbar Haqq. Dr. Doris and Jonathan: Lunch at restaurant. Live lobster. "Do you like working here?"

Chapter IV Chicago

Arrival at O' Hare airport. Rev. Awiqam and people. Going to Church at North Pulaski Road. Dinner at Monastero. Staying with Mar Narsai Metropolitan. Sitar at Arlington Heights Public library. Visit to Thomasula family. Indian dinner at Chaupati Restaurant. Vespers at Church. Ashurbanipal library. Sunday Qurbana. Indian Independence day. Visit to David Oommen. Dr. Roy. Jokes. Dinner. Sitar. Monday stroll. Catholic Church of St. Mary. Vespers. Visiting Margaret Baba Paul. Dr. Arthur Voobus. Deacon Geevarghese Benjamin. Assyrian from Canada.

Chapter V Ann Arbor

My sister Leela and nephew Aprem. Baggage area. Car parking problem Ann Arbor. Modern technology. Addison & Molly. Grace Mary, Sleep after 2 a.m. for three nights. Dr. Davy Emmatty. David Lazar and son Adam. Prayer

meeting. Tony Emmatty, Sunny Nallengara and Chinnan Mookan. Dr. Saji Alex, Asha, Professor Alexander Alex.

Chapter VI Boston to New York

Streeter Stuart and his daughter Twyla Lexington. Mrs. Merle Stuart. Eating in Restaurant. Played sitar. Telephone with Streeter Stuart Jr. Visiting Boston College. Professor Maggie Schatkin. Boston University. Professor Leroy S. Rouner. Kennedy home. Dukakis home. Greek Orthodox Seminary. Bellmont Nutrition Centre, Airport. New York Geevarghese Emmatty. Friends gathering. Video Playing Sitar. Prayer. Visiting Dr. James' family. Lunch at Thermadom family. Farewell to USA

Chapter VII To Belgium

Infant de la Paix. Joseph Webber. Welkenraed Henri-Chapelle American cemetery. Catholic monastery. Catholic Church in Chereneu Eric Constant. Joseph Longton. Ecumenic priest. Behold the Cross of Calvary in French language. Sold sitar to Eric.

Chapter VIII Syriac Symposium

5th Symposium. Louvain. Catholic University. Scholars from Abroad Papers in English German and French. Dinner by Mr&Mrs Petee.

Chapter IX Fourth Visit to Holland

Amsterdam airport. Duyn family. Dav Zutphum. Dr. Bernard Peters. Museum: Church Library. Car by gas. Playing sitar. Peter Ult Aardenburg. Joyce. Return to India.

INTRODUCTION

In July 1988, when I was starting my journey abroad I commenced writing this travelogue. In the front page I wrote that the manuscript would be ready in September 88 and the book would be printed and released in October 88. An ambitious plan indeed!

Now in June 1989 as the printing of this book is being completed nine months late, the lesson I have learned from this delay is that writing travelogues, or any books for that matter, is not an easy exercise! Still why do I write? Any writer should write when there was an inner urge to use his pen.

These are not mere travelogues. Church history of today is recorded through the descriptions of the happenings in the Church inside and outside. This is not for propaganda. The

historian's interest in scientific and accurate history has been maintained in my personal observations of things I saw.

There are a lot of things I wanted to do. Many people I should have met in this trip could not be contacted. Within a short and limited visit it is not easy to visit people living at a distance from the international airports I went through.

Not only Assyrians and Indians are personalities depicted here. The Americans, the British, the Dutch and such personalities make this canvass colourful and international.

I have used simple language with which I am familiar which will be easily understood by the English speaking and non-English speaking people alike. In this book after this introduction, I have narrated my trip with chronological accuracy in the next nine chapters.

In Boston, Streeter Stuart Sr and his wife Merle were happy to see me. They were younger than my mother. They did not look more than sixty. They were sixty several years ago. The secret of their longevity of life is vitamin C in natural foods. While in India they advised me to take 3000 mg of vitamin C. That is

00 mg tablets. My doctors told me that it is useless to take more than one tablet daily. So I reduced my daily vitamin C from 6 to 1. Later I stopped taking that also, as I already get enough of vitamin C from the fresh lemon juice I often drink, with a pinch of salt, being a diabetic.

“Do you still take 3000mg vitamin C daily?” queried Streeter Stuart anticipating a negative response. He replied “No, I do not take 3000mg of vitamin C now. I take 15000 daily.” I could not believe his reply. But he believes in the efficacy of such massive doses of vitamin C and practises it with religious zeal. To him vitamin C is a wonder vitamin. It is a miracle medicine. It can cure or prevent many diseases. It is not his individual fancy. It is the opinion of the Nobel laureate Linus C. Polling who has the rare distinction of two Nobel Prizes, one in Chemistry in 1954 and the other of Peace in 1962. Streeter does not consume ordinary vitamins available from the medical stores. He takes natural vitamins available at health food store. Even for ice creams he does not add artificial colours. We should use natural colours. I agree with him. Canned food, artificial colours etc. can be a curse and could cause cancer.

Mrs. Powers and another lady came to visit the Stuarts' house. Mrs. Powers' husband was top *aide* to President Kennedy. Mrs. Powers is now a Jehovah's Witness. She came to convert the Stuarts to the new doctrine which had captured her attention. I told Mrs. Powers that John Kennedy was well respected and loved by the people in India. But Mrs. Powers and her friend had come now to convert all of us to the faith of Jehovah's Witnesses. She tried to thrust some propaganda literature into my hands. I told her that I was familiar with the new doctrine already in India and since there was no time I was not going to argue for or against the teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses. She appreciated. I admired her dedication to the cause which she espoused. The Jehovah's witnesses walk from house to house, in pairs, preaching the gospel of "Jehovah." I do not know whether they get any converts by this intensive and aggressive missionary activity of visiting houses. I wish some of my clergymen learned the art of house visiting from these ladies.

The house John Kennedy was born and brought up in Boston is a monument. If you pay \$ 1 you can enter and walk through all the rooms. It is a one week permit. When we

entered each room we could press a button and hear the tape recording narration by President Kennedy's mother. Although Rose Kennedy passed away several years after the assassination of her famous son John, it was good that the recordings were made in her own words and vivid voice. Some family photos on the walls also are historically informative. For example when we were in the room where John was born the records narration informed that he was born at home like all other Presidents of the U. S. A. except Jimmy Carter who was a hospital baby. Even Ronald Reagen was born at home.

As we said good bye at the Boston airport, I was sorry to leave such good friends. Streeter Stuart had written a very good "Foreword" to my autobiography "Strange But True" in 1980. In 1977 he had arranged an interview for me in the Radio. Having taught Spanish and Romance languages at the Boston University he was a newscaster in the radio station in Boston. So he could easily arrange such an interview at such a short notice. This time also he wanted to arrange a radio interview for me if I had half a day to spare. Unfortunately my total stay was of one day only. Still we did a lot during that 24 hours such as a visit to Kennedy house, Dukakis's house, Boston College, Boston *University*, Belmont Nutritionl Centre etc.

In New York Kennedy airport again. The place I landed in 1966 as a young 26 year old priest. Much has happened to me during the past 22 years. With nostalgic memories I got out of the aircraft to realise that the baggage slip was lost. I must have dropped it in my seat in the aircraft. It was not easy to go back and look in my seat. I took the baggages from the belt and walked out telling the man on duty that I had lost my receipts. He did not object. He believed me.

Here again nobody was waiting for me. I did not worry. Because this was the repetition of what happened in Minneapolis, Chicago, Detroit and Boston. Here again my host had gone to park his car asking his son and his cousin Johnson's son Denzil, the tennis champion who is studying in the U.S.A. on a tennis scholarship. These two teenagers were somewhere looking for me. But I came out at the exit. Finally my host Geevarghese Emmatty saw me outside and asked me where were the boys. When I replied that I never saw them, he had to go in search of them.

Dr. James Moffat, a Professor at Princeton, was a speaker at the Maramon convention in Kerala in Feb. 88. I had told him that I would

include Princeton in my trip to the U. S. A. Dr. Miss Kathleen McVey is a Syriac scholar and an Associate Professor in Princeton Theological Seminary. She had come to Kerala to attend the World Syriac Conference in Sept. 1987 and I told her that I would meet her in Princeton. She is the first Roman Catholic to be appointed to a permanent teaching post at this presbyterian Seminary. She was writing a book on St. Ephrem which I am also doing.

I wished to meet some familiar persons such as Professor Bruce Metzger, the internationally known New Testament professor with whom I had corresponded since I left Princeton. In 1988 the alumni office had written that "1968 class" was meeting as a special group after 20 years during the alumni meeting. Moreover it was 150th anniversary of the founding of the Princeton Seminary. But living in India it was not easy for us to attend such functions or keep in touch with class mates and friends.

Dr. Tadatake Maruyama was a doctoral student with me in Princeton. He was from Japan. Although I left Princeton in 1968 after one year of Th. D. studies, he continued there and took a doctorate. I had lost contact with him. Recently a friend of mine Dr. Akbar Haqq

had visited Tokyo Christian Theological seminary in Tokyo. Talking about the history of the Nestorian Church in Japan in the middle ages Dr. Haqq mentioned my name to its Principal. Instantly came the reply from the Principal "Oh, that is not Mar Aprem. It is George Mookan. He was my class mate in Princeton." I was happy to establish contact with him and express the desire that one day I would meet him in Japan, a country I have never visited.

Perhaps I should attend the alumni gathering of 1998. In Princeton I had to meet the children I used to babysit for a dollar an hour. Twenty two years later they have become fathers and mothers themselves. They might welcome an old baby sitter. I still remember one little girl asking me while saying good bye before going to Bagdad in Sept. 1968 to be made a bishop "George, will you sit for us after you become a bishop?"

CHAPTER I

SIXTH VISIT TO ENGLAND

It was hurried departure from Trichur. As my mother was in the hospital I had to visit her before leaving. Her right leg was swollen. I wanted to report to my brothers and sisters abroad about the latest position of my mother's illness. I delayed my visit to her to the last moment, just before my leaving Trichur. There was no time to change my sandals which I usually use in India for the shoes which my friends had bought for me in Australia last year. I decided to carry the shoes in my brief case and change when I leave New Delhi for abroad.

When I took out the shoes after eating our supper in the hotel in Delhi my attention was directed to some letters which I had to sign and post in Delhi before I left India. The Indian postage stamps on the envelope would not be valid if I delayed posting them for a few hours and I got into the aeroplane. But when the letters were ready for posting I rushed to do that forgetting to put on the shoes. In a hurry I forgot

the shoes I had already taken out of the brief case. I searched for it in my brief case only after I reached Amsterdam airport. But the shoes were lying in the hotel in Delhi thousands of miles away. Since I did not pay any tip to the waiters at the hotel, somebody must be wearing it as the courtesy gift of some rich traveller.

For the benefit of people travelling abroad I must mention here that the foreign airlines staff are usually available at the arrival area in the Delhi domestic airport. It was so comfortable to see KLM staff as soon as we arrived in Delhi. I just took my baggage and handed it over to the KLM hostesses who took care of the baggage. Then they took us in a special coach to the hotel and gave us dinner coupons and after some rest they took us to the international airport for departure. Since our baggage were already checked in by the KLM staff, it was easy for us just to pay Rs. 100 airport tax and obtain the boarding pass and pass through the security and immigration areas. Those who needed the \$ 20 exchange should obtain it after getting the boarding pass.

There was a young clergyman from Mizoram going for higher studies to the United States of

America. This was his first foreign travel. At supper time in the hotel in Delhi he told me that he would follow me like an obedient son and I should guide him like a father. I promised to guide him until Amsterdam from where he was to catch another flight to America while I was to go to London.

Caution is necessary about the dinner voucher. The voucher guarantees food to the value of Rs. 94/- I ordered a fish dish, *Chapatti* (Bread) and a cup of tea. The waiter was kind enough to tell me that the three items would cost more than the maximum of Rs. 94 permitted in the voucher. Therefore I would have to pay the excess amount. Then I said I would be satisfied with the fish and chapatti only as I had no intention to pay extra. I had taken Rs. 94/- as money big enough to buy a more than sumptuous meal. But in a 5 star hotel it is only a paltry sum that fetches an austere fare. My young friend from Mizoram did not order anything except a cup of tea, perhaps fearing that anything solid in the form of food ordered would drain his wallet heavily.

We were scheduled to leave Delhi early morning at 1-30 a. m. After boarding the aircraft, we had finished eating a good meal when

we were told that we had not taken off from Delhi. Usually food is served after the take off of the flight. So I was under the impression that we had departed from our beloved country and was soaring in the skies on our way to Europe. So it was with surprise that we heard the announcement of the captain about the preparation for departure. Thus at about 2-45 a. m. we left Delhi and flew for more than eight hours non-stop. When our watch showed 10.50 a. m. we reached Amsterdam. But the local time was only 7.20 a. m., i. e. three and half hours behind our Indian standard time. The captain took a short and fast route, because of the turbulent weather as well as the delay in departure. Since several of the passengers had to go to England or America he flew over Afghanistan, Russia, Poland, & Germany to Holland entering from the north near Groningen. We were glad that we made the connection, although some of us missed our connecting flights owing to the delayed departure.

Our hostess in the tourist Class was extremely nice. I realise that an air hostess is a highly trained personnel who manages to keep up a cheerful external appearance even in the most trying circumstances of hard work & unforeseen calamities. They can smile even at a hijacker whose gun is pointed at their faces.

All KLM flights operate through 'Amsterdam' Schiphol airport. So for flights to London, I had to land at Amsterdam and wait for the flight to London. During the waiting time in the morning I searched for my shoes and I discovered that they were lying in Delhi. While at Amsterdam I was able to change the routing of my return flight from the U. S. A. The return ticket was from Chicago to Amsterdam. I got it changed to New York—Amsterdam, as I would be in New York at the end of my American journey. It was a waste of money and time to go to Chicago from New York, as I had arranged my domestic ticket from San Francisco to New York via Minneapolis, Chicago and Boston. Since Amsterdam was the head quarters, they just put the sticker New York to Amsterdam in 2 to 3 minutes. Such a quick changeover would probably entail a lot of bureaucratic fuss and delay that could take 3 or 4 days in India. Even reservations made very early and okayed by the Airline have to be reconfirmed. Moreover being a subsidised ticket, clearance from RAPTIM transports, Holland had to be obtained. For those travelling by RAPTIM subsidy it is not easy to make changes in the itinerary. It is easier to abide by earlier approved itinerary.

At Amsterdam airport, there is a chapel. I found some time to sit quietly in that prayer

room and pray for blessings for travel mercie. When I left Amsterdam it was 9 a. m. and when I reached London it was again 9 a. m. This happened because the English time was one hour behind European time which was again $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours behind the Indian time. In October it would be again one more hour behind India time i. e. $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours both at Europe and England. I hear that England has decided to follow the European time for the sake of convenience.

My sister Sushila, and her second daughter Dr. Sheena, along with several Assyrian friends were waiting for me. Since it was morning time on a working day I did not expect many people as was the case during my 1983 visit to receive me at the airport. In 1983 I arrived in the evening which was convenient for people to come. In 1984 it was a last minute change in my programme which made it difficult for my friends to be informed about my arrival at short notice.

Since there was some delay in the departure of our flight from Delhi, the stay in Amsterdam was short. Therefore KLM had not transferred our baggage in our flight when we left Amsterdam. We were disappointed not to find our baggage in London's Heathrow airport.

men we reached. We were promised that the baggage would arrive in the next flight. We were required to hand over the keys of our baggage so that KLM could open it for Customs checking and deliver it to us at our places of stay. We gladly gave our keys. When the baggage was delivered in the afternoon, there were no keys. When we complained officials asked us to wait till next morning when the drivers of the vehicles who delivered the baggage returned. The next day when the drivers reported for duty they denied any knowledge of the existence of the keys. The people in the house where I stayed wanted to see my sitar. It was in a new case with a new lock. We were advised by the KLM to go to a locksmith and to make duplicate keys and claim the cost from the KLM. We found it easier to break the lock rather than to look for a locksmith and claim the cost. It was perhaps not a wise decision, but an easy and quick solution. After all Indian locks are not difficult to break. James, cousin of Eshaya Memmani, my host, did the breaking job admirably after failing to open it with several most-duplicate keys. The Assyrians were happy to see me play the Indian musical instrument, *sitar*.

After spending two days in London during which time Dr. Leonard Henderson, the music

consultant who wrote the foreword to my book *Behold the Cross of Calvary in 103 languages* came to see me; I went to my sister's home in Rugby. My sister and her husband Dr. N. V. George came from Rugby to take me to Luton. Since another family from Trichur Jose Thaickadan was staying in Luton, on our way we decided to finish that visit as my days in England were only a few. When we stopped on our way to Rugby, Mrs. Jose insisted that we should visit them again on Sunday when we return from Rugby to London. They were eager to have me bless their home and eat food there. Her husband Jose an engineer in a car factory in Germany had chosen England to set up home. But he did not find the atmosphere there very friendly. Being a coloured man, an Indian, he did not feel that all white men were as friendly as he wanted them to be. In the neighbourhood where he lives he was the only Indian. He bought that house from an English millionaire. The car in the garage of that house was once a splendid Rolls Royce. Now it is replaced by a Volvo. Jose's wife and sons do not drive. He uses it when he visits England once or twice a month. He tried to book a flight to London (Luton has a domestic airport) that week-end to be present when I call on Sunday to bless his house. But it was the last

day of July and there was heavy rush. He had to be content with speaking to me over the telephone when I was in his home.

Dr. Joe Philips is an Orthodox Syrian layman from Kerala settled down in England. During my 1984 visit he attended the Qurbana in the Assyrian Hall in Ealing, London. He is one of my international readers. (I do not know whether I have more readers abroad than in India!). He had purchased several of my books including *Teach Yourself Aramaic*. When I telephoned to him from London he was not sure whether he would find time to meet me. Anyhow he found time to come to Rugby and spend the day with me. He brought chocolates. But it was special diabetic chocolates, as he knew that I was suffering from diabetes. To my surprise the diabetic chocolates did not taste bitter, as I suspected. It tasted as good as any other chocolate. Without the label you cannot tell whether it had sugar or not.

Among other friends, Dr. O. R. Timothy, telephoned to me. Since he was busy that weekend we could not meet personally. I had spent one day with him in Leeds in 1977. We met in London in 1983 and 84 and later in Trichur in 1986 or so with his Scottish son-in-law.

Aprem de Kelaita is a friend whom I visited in his home in Ealing. I stayed in his house when I was studying in England in 1961—62. His father Fr. Joseph de Kelaita was the greatest Syriac scholar of the century. He was in India in 1920—21 making “types” for the Syriac press. He took them to Mosul where he printed many liturgical books in the old Syriac which we call Aramaic. From the same font, types for Mar Narsai Press, were cast when it started functioning in 1926 after Joseph de Kelaita had left India. Joseph de Kelaita was only a deacon when he was in India. He was ordained a priest in 1928 in Mosul by his own cousin Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan of Malabar and India during his sojourn in Mosul as Regent to the Patriarch.

Rabbi Aprem is the eldest son of the Revd. Joseph de Kelaita. He was never ordained. Although a layman, Rabbi Aprem takes interest in Church matters. His wife Hanna is the sister of the late Mar Yosip Khananisho Metropolitan who died in Iraq in July 1977. She is the younger sister of the mother of the late Mar Eshai Shimun who became Patriarch way back in 1920 while he was 12 years old and was killed on 6 November 1975. Therefore one could say Aprem being uncle of the Patriarch

and the brother-in-law of the senior most Metropolitan was close to the hierarchy for more than half a century. But in fairness to him it should be stated that he kept away from being entangled in the the unfortunate power politics in the Church. That must be the reason I was able to keep my friendship with him for the past 27 years. Ofcourse his father Revd. Joseph Kelaita *also was not close to the power structure.* He kept himself busy printing books and teaching children and keeping the ancient Aramaic language alive among the past and the present generation. Some Assyrians had suggested to me that I should write a biography of the Revd. Joseph de Kelaita. An honest biography of the Revd. Joseph de Kelaita cannot be written without mentioning the Assyrian tribal politics, or Church disputes. Whatever I know of that subject is less than what I do not know. It would suffice to record here that Rabbi Aprem, (who was suffering from rheumatism) was happy to see me. Considering his old age I am not sure when will I see him again.

On Sunday after visiting Jose Thaickaden's family we went to St. Georges' hospital, London where my sister's second daughter Dr. Sheena had just graduated with her M. B. B. S. degree. She was to start her internship the next

day at the same hospital. Although her room is in the same compound and she did not need to travel much except to her house in Rugby, she wanted to buy a new car exchanging her old car. We went to look for a five door Nissan. It costs about £8000, which is about Rs. 2 lakhs. (A lakh is an Indian English word which means 100,000 (Hundred Thousand). I notice several American visitors get confused when Indians talk about a lakh). Ofcourse it is better than our Indian Ambassador car which costs a little more than one lakh rupees (£4000 or \$7000). We noticed that there are discounts offered by different dealers. In India it is the same price for a car from any dealer. It is the price fixed by the company. The dealers get their commission, but do not offer any reduction. But there different dealers appeared to be willing to share their discounts with the customers.

After visiting Dr. George's niece, we came to the Chemmani house in Ealing where my neighbour in Trichur Mr. Thomas was waiting for me.

Yathron Darmo, brother of Freidon Darmo, whom I had met in my previous visits of 1983 and 84, came to see me. Mr. Emmanuel Kelaita was also with him. Though the name Darmo reminds me of Mar Thoma Darmo, my consecrator, they have nothing in common. Yathron

Darmo came to remind me that Mar Thoma Darmo was suspended by late Mar Eshai Shimun and therefore my consecration was not valid. I politely informed him that even before Mar Shimun was shot dead in Nov. 1975 the High Court of Kerala had decreed that the suspension order of Mar Darmo by Mar Eshai Shimun was null and void. I told that there is no "stay" on that order. Although the supporters of Mar Shimun filed an appeal in the Supreme Court of India in New Delhi, legally the so called suspension order signed by Mar Shimun on 10 January 1964 is "null and void" in India. The majority of the members of the Church in India will never accept the suspension as valid. As a peace-loving person I told them that it is better not to rake up this contention for the sake of unity of our Church in India and abroad. I shared with him the truth that it would be an exercise in futility to hope even as a remote possibility to get the suspension order enforced either legally or by popular support from the congregation. The readers of this book will realise this truth and will work for unity.

The Lambeth Conference is a meeting of Bishops of the Anglican communion. It meets once in ten years. There were about 500 bishops and about 400 bishops' wives. The venue

was the University of Kent in Canterbury about two hours of distance from London by car. The conference was held from 16 July to 6 August 1988. There were fraternal delegates such as Archdeacon Yonen Youvil, priest of our Church in London, delegate of Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV. I was invited as a guest, as I wrote to them that I was passing through London those days. Rev. William Hill made arrangements, for me and took me around.

Fr. Oppenheimer of New Zealand who was my guest in Trichur, 2 or 3 years ago, was there. He escorted me around and arranged for me to meet Bishop Henry Hill of Toronto, a retired bishop, interested in Eastern Churches. He presented me with a copy of his book dealing with our Church. Professor Rowaan Williams, a young but brilliant, Professor at Oxford, is the son-in-law of Bishop Geoffrey Paul whom I had met in England in 1961 during my studies. He was the Principal of the Theological Seminary Trivandrum, Kerala. Aprem Mar Thimotheos Metropolitan of the Syrian Orthodox Church was there. I knew him while he was working in Kerala as Aprem Aboudi Ramban.

Many Indian bishops were attending the Lambeth Conference. Bishop Victor Premsagar

oderator of the church of South India, Bishop Jesudason, former Moderator of Church of South India, Bishop Din Dayal, Moderator of the Church of North India, Bishop Alexander Galik, Moderator of the Church of Pakistan are some of my friends whom I could briefly meet. Bishop Franklin Jonathen (Chairman of CASA), Bishop Joseph Mar Irenaeus of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church, Poulouse Mar Gregorios, Metropolitan of the Orthodox Syrian Church (one of the Presidents of W. C. C.) are some of my other friends, I could greet. 6 bishops from S. I. and 5 bishops from C. N. I. attended Lambeth. Rev. James Massey, General Secretary of the I. S. P. C. K., Delhi, a leading Christian Publishing House, sat with me while eating the lunch.

I was happy to see Archbishop Tutu of South Africa, the Nobel Peace Prize winner of 1985, in the front row participating in the debates. Robert Runcie, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was presiding over the session.

Consecrating women as bishop was the hotly debated issue on Monday 1 August when I attended. Late in the afternoon voting took place. The verdict was in favour of women. Some women were singing song just outside the hall,

displaying placards. There were no violent demonstration, still police were watching. I stood there reading the slogans on the placards knowing that I *didn't* have to vote in the conference, as I was only a guest. "Women is a live issue in any Church. The Archbishop requested participants not to indulge in a noisy jubilation when the results were announced. I was impressed by the total silence when the results were known. I am sure that the women were happy. Some news papers wrote that the Prime Minister Mrs. Margaret Thatcher interfered behind the scenes to get a vote favouring women bishops.

"Wives' conference" was a special feature of Lambeth Conference this year. The wives of the bishops met separately in a hall allotted to them. On the television we noticed two days before the voting the leaders such as Mr. Tutu asking the wives to stand up, turn right and to tell loudly that my "My husband is a good boy," then to turn to their left and say more jubilantly, "But I am a better girl." This they did amidst laughter. We the television viewers, especially the men, laughed wondering how cunning these women are and what tall claims they make when they are away from the men.

The Lambeth Conference had attracted the attention of lot of people. The issue of the women becoming bishops was a hot issue. Even Indians belonging to the Catholic Church began to express their opinion that women should be made bishops in the Anglican Church. Confronted with this question I explained that I was attending Lambeth Conference as a guest and my opinion did not matter. When pressed for an answer I replied that our Church being an Eastern Church should wait to hear the debate in other Eastern Churches. We respect our women like all other Churches. Women are very active in Church matters in our Church too. But ordination of women to priesthood is not welcomed in our Church in the immediate future. But as other Churches such as Anglicans will have women bishops, all the Eastern Churches like ours will have to follow suit. Will I depart in peace before that happens I do not know.

In my second book of humour, *Laugh with the Bishop* there is a joke of the Pope asking Jesus in a vision "Will the priests in the Catholic Church ever marry"? and the Lord replies "Not in your time." It is a million dollar question for a bishop in the Eastern Church if he gets a vision of Jesus to ask whether will there be lady bishop in the Catholic and the Eastern Churches.

The reply will be "not in the 20th century." What will happen in the 21st century is beyond my comprehension. As a matter of fact even in England, the first lady bishop may not be consecrated in the present century. Even the ordination of first lady-priest in the Anglican Church in England may have to wait for two or three years. The Americans, on the other hand, moved faster. In Massachusetts near Boston Rev. Barbara Harris became a Suffragan Bishop contesting the election, defeating a male priest. Bishop Barbara was elected in September within two months of the favourable voting in Lambeth on 1 August 1988 and was consecrated in Feb. 1989. In India there are only a few female priests in the C. S. I. and C. N. I. and it will take some years before they defeat their male counterparts some of whom are their own husbands.

Thus my visit came to an end after six days. I did not conduct a common service in England on Sunday as I had anticipated. Archdeacon Yonen Youvel declared that there would not be any service on three Sundays continuously as he was busy in Lambeth, although I had written to him conveying my willingness to conduct a Qurbana as I did in 1983 assisted by Deacon Bawai. I was also willing to participate like I

id in 1984 when Mar Narsai of Lebanon conducted Qurbana in the same place. Since there was no reply from him I knew what the response would be. Some Assyrian friends were angry about it. They had given donation to build an Assyrian Church in Ealing, London dedicated by Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV in 1987 on the specific assurance that the Church would be open for our Church leaders observing the Old Calendar (i. e. January 7th for Christmas) and when they visited London.

When I offered myself to be available on Sunday July 31, we knew the doors of the Church would not to be open. Some members of the church told me that they knew how doors could be opened. My advice was against it. As it is a small congregation in London I did not want any division to occur among them on account of me. But at the same time if the people of the new calendar did not respect the feelings of the Assyrians observing the old calendar, the natural outcome will be a separate congregation as it happened in Chicago, San Francisco, Melbourne, Sydney etc. James, who reads several books on our Church and collects photocopies of rare Syriac books, offered to be ordained a priest. At this stage it is premature to predict that there will be a London parish of the Assyrians observing the January 7th calendar.

The British government charged Rs. 400 for a single entry visa to England. Although many Indians feel that it is too much we are told that it is the same amount which Indian Consulate in London is charging for British citizens to visit India. Gone are the days when India enjoyed a proud place in the British Commonwealth and we Indians visited England without visa and vice versa.

This was my sixth visit to England. The first one was longer when I studied (1961—62) at St. Boniface College, Warminster, Wiltshire, part of King's College, London at that time. The second visit was in 1966 while going to study in U. S. A. The next three visits were in 1977, 1983 & 1984. Thus this was the sixth visit. In six days I could not do much in visiting friends or reading in libraries.

CHAPTER II

CALIFORNIA

On August 2nd Tuesday several Assyrian friends were present at London's Heathrow airport to bid farewell to me. The friends expressed the wish that I should visit them soon and not after a long interval of four years the previous time. The little girl Susie who made my friendship in 1984 and 1988 said "Kassi, you must come next year." "Yes", I replied. "Promise?" She insisted. I replied readily "promise." Then she was happy and cheerfully bid good bye. I had hurried to the airport after a quick breakfast which was not in the schedule.

I was asked to sign no claim for damage as they were not sure about the safety of my sitar along with other baggage. However they put a special label of "glass, handle with care" on my sitar box.

The KLM flight took me to Amsterdam. After a couple of hours' stay at the airport I boarded the non-stop flight from Amsterdam to

Los Angeles. The flight took about 9 or 10 hours. We reached Los Angeles at about 4 p. m. U. S. time. But by watch which was set to the British time registered the time of my arrival as 10 p. m.

My brother Jose Mookan and his youngest daughter Mickey (Michalle) were there to receive and drive me to San Diego where they live. It was nice to see them. Before leaving Trichur I had met Professor Saramma Thomas, the new Principal of the Chaldean Syrian College, Trichur and her husband Mr. Thomas P. Samuel. They had given me the address and phone number of their daughter Elizabeth (Omana). It was only recently that she had moved from Toronto to San Diego along with her husband Dr. Varghese. It was also by chance my brother met this family on the week end before my going to Los Angeles. So we telephoned and had supper in their home the next evening. Dr. Varghese's sister and her husband and their sons (two tall teenagers) were there on vacation from Canada.

The next evening we had supper with another Jose and on Friday all the Malayalee families in the neighbourhood were invited to the house of my brother for sharing Kerala meals and Kerala talk. The rejoicing of the

et together if not uproarious was nevertheless a
made too noisy for the liking of the neighbours.
disturbed the neighbours. We had warned
them early that we were going to have guests.
ut I guess our neighbours had never anticipated
at these Indians were such a noisy crowd.
hey must have marvelled at the speed
with which these Indians rattled off their mother
ongue—Malayalam.

I played sitar for them and we sang both
evotional and secular songs in our language.
A very popular Malayalam song was *Aiyiram
annumai Kathiruppuninne gnan* (with a thousand
eyes I was waiting for you.....) tuned by
erry Amaldev and counted as a hit song by
inema going public in Kerala. Almost every-
ody in our “madding crowd” knew this song.
Although I played sitar for this song I did not
know all the words of this cinema song, as I do
not have the habit of going to the movie houses.
I learned the tune without learning the lyric. I
guess the singer is waiting not for a lover but
for a bird!

Earlier we had gone to the store and my
mother bought me clothes for my cassock. I
must confess that I am not a very discerning
customer when it comes to selection of material
and colour for my cassocks. As a bishop I wear

mostly colours other than black. Black is reserved for the Good Friday. I do not have any preference for any special colour as most of my cassocks are gifts from relatives or friends. It is cheaper to buy cloth in America (there was some reduction on the price on that day) but it is terribly expensive to get it stitched. Labour is cheap in India.

There was no time for any sight seeing spread at San Diego. Moreover, I had seen most of the important tourist attractions like the San Diego zoo etc. in 1977. On Saturday 6th August we planned to start early from San Diego and stop to visit a friend in Hollywood and to reach Turlock by evening. But since we had a late dinner with Kerala friends on Friday night and one of us could not get up early morning. I got up packed and began to play my sitar hoping to wake the remaining four who were still in sound sleep. Before a late start at about 9.20 a. m. I had to telephone to my friend in Hollywood that we will reach there two hours late. We reached there by Twelve noon instead of 10 a. m. which we had planned earlier.

After leaving Hollywood by about 1'0 Clock we headed north to Turlock. The state highway speed limit is 65. My niece Miriam being

youngster took the freedom to go at least 10 miles overspeed. Wherever it was written 55 miles speed she went 65. Since it was one way route, we could comfortably drive at 75 or even 80. In India we cannot drive at such high speed because of heavy traffic from the opposite direction as most roads are not restricted to one-way traffic.

By 7 p. m. we reached Turlock. We knew Houston was some where near and so we would not be very late. I was supposed to lead the evening prayer (*Ramsha*) by 7 P. M. But we could not find any sign board showing the direction to Houston. We began to panick. We inquired at gas stations. But the people working in gas stations (we call them petrol pumps in India) did not know the right directions. Finally a lady in a store gave us correct directions with a comment that Houston was in Texas, while the place we were searching in California was near Turlock. Following her directions we crossed the railway cross, went past the blinking lights and took two turns. Very close to the Marth Mariyam Church, in fact a few houses before it, we stopped the car and asked a lady who was in her garage about the whereabouts of the Church. She stated that there was no Church in that street. Then

we tried on our own and saw Bishop Mar Daniel and the Revd. Eshai Joseph waiting for us in front of the Church. I was really surprised that the family living in the street so close to the Church did not know of the existence of the Church. When I expressed my surprise to an Assyrian friend, he remarked "Don't be surprised about this. Some of these people do not know who their father or mother is."

After the evening prayer in the Church and meeting with our Assyrian friends we went to stay with Yacoub S. Yacoub, cousin of the late Mar Thoma Darmo who was Metropolitan in India for more than 16 years and Patriarch at Bagdad for a year until his death on 7 Sept. 1969. It was nice to talk with him as his friend. We felt almost like relatives. We are spiritually related to Mar Thoma Darmo; Yacoub Yacoub family is physically related to Mar Darmo.

While we were talking an old lady was seen moving around in the house. She appeared to me about 80 or 90 years old. She was the elder sister of the mother of Yacoub. I was pleasantly surprised to hear that this lady, Shirim Yosip Kallu, is the oldest person in America. She had celebrated her 117th birthday in July, having been born in 1872 in Jelu, Turkey. The oldest

person recorded in the Guinness book of World Records was one born in 1873. *In that respect* Shirin is one year older. There are reports that people, aged 130 or so are living in Azerbaijan in Russia. But some claims cannot be proved by actual records.

Bishop Mar Daniel Yakob is a young episcopa who was consecrated in Bagdad on 23 Feb. 1973 when he was about 21½ years old having been born on 13 July 1951. He was ordained deacon on 29 April 1970 at Mar Geevarghese Church, Daura, Bagdad and promoted as a priest on 21 March 1971 at Marth Mariyam Church, New Bagdad when he was not even 20 years of age. He told me that he was consecrated in the Mar Zaiya Cathedral, Karradat Mariyam, Bagdad, Iraq where I was consecrated earlier i. e. on 21 Sept. 1968 as episcopa and 29 Sept, 1968 as Metropolitan.

Mar Daniel later left Iraq for California and is staying with his brothers. In 1984 he met Patriarch Mar Adhai during his visit to California. Since 1987 he is the Bishop under H. H. Mar Adhai II for California. He assisted me in the evening prayers in the Church and for Qurbana on Sunday. He entertained me with lunch at the restaurant run by his brothers.

Since I do not eat meat ever since I became Bishop in 1968 following the custom of my predecessors, I was served delicious fish. The restaurant specialises in fish.

Rev. Eshai Joseph, serves the Marth Mariyam Church, as an honorary priest without salary. He earns his living by working in the railway. He is about to retire at the age of 65. I hope that it will help him to give more time for the Church. He has a farm which the Patriarch and I visited in 1984. He was a priest in Iraq and had to leave the Church following differences of opinion with Mar Eshai Shimun. But after the death of Mar Shimun he served for some time under Mar Dinoa, who was his deacon for about 30 years ago. Rev. Eshai Joseph is optimistic about the future of our Church in America.

When I celebrated Qurbana on Sunday 7th August at Marth Mariyam Church, people were happy to hear me recite prayers in our old language which we call Aramaic and western scholars call Syriac. While preaching I used some words in the old language and the rest in English. Some Assyrians, although they live in America, do not speak English. They usually speak Assyrian or "modern language". There

was a reception or luncheon after Qurbana in the hall. The Church has good facilities for hall, rest rooms, kitchen, office room etc.

On Monday we went to visit Yosemite, which is the National Park in California. It is a tourist attraction. During my visit in 1967, deacon Yuash de Kelaita had suggested that I should visit Yosemite. I did not know that it was such an important place. In my second visit to California in 1977 and in my third visit in 1984 I could not find time. But now Bahram Bahrami, President of Broony Construction Limited, Turlock drove me to the Yosemite. On the way Bahram (Bob) showed me some beautiful houses. Being a building contractor he had a professional curiosity in new models of houses and I joined him in looking up a big mansion. He had a look at one big mansion. The house looked like Xanadu, shown in the cartoons of Mandrake, the Magician.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth had visited Yosemite Park and expressed her opinion that it was a marvel. To give the readers some idea of the park, given below is an extract from the official brochure issued by the US Department of the Interior.

Yosemite National Park embraces a vast tract of scenic wildlands set aside in 1864 to preserve a portion of the Sierra Nevada mountains that stretches along California's eastern flank. The park ranges from 610 meters (2,000 feet) above sea level to more than 3,960 meters (13,000 feet) and offers three major features: alpine wilderness, groves of Giant Sequoias, and Yosemite Valley. The 325 Kilometers (200 miles) of roads give access to all of these features either by car or by free shuttlebus in some areas.

To get to know the real Yosemite, however, you must leave your car and take a few steps on a trail. You don't have to walk far to discover the grandeur that can be found here and the values this special place offers. Thousands of people have come to Yosemite and left refreshed and relaxed and perhaps a bit more knowledgeable about what they want out of life. See what you can find.

We had not much time for a leisurely look around. We had difficulty in finding a parking place as we had entered the centre of the park. Later we discovered that we could have parked

the car somewhere and should have used the little bus inside the park area. It is a free ride. Actually we were forced to park the car in a place where we would attract fine. But nobody gave a parking ticket perhaps realising the dilemma that we were in a parking area which was full and could not easily go back.

Without a neck tie and formal suit visitors will not be allowed in the main restaurant. This is to keep the "hippies" out. I did not have a neck tie. I thought it was a blessing in disguise. We could eat in an ordinary restaurant, enjoy the open fresh air and pay less for the food.

There was an interview at the Assyrian television programme of Beth Nahrain. I have been a regular reader of Beth Nahrain magazine since its beginning. Dr. Sargon Dadeesho had taken me in 1984 in the house of Deacon Benjamin, who is sales Representative of Certified Life Insurance Company in Modesto. Now Deacon Ben Benjamin wanted to take me for this interview. This invitation created some controversy. I am not able to understand the reason for the rivalries running rife among the few Assyrians I meet. I accepted this invitation only after ascertaining and making certain that it was a personal invitation and not an official

programme of our church in Hughson, Calif. I record it here not with any pride, but clarify to the future Assyrians what the truth really is.

Mrs. Christine de Kelaita telephoned me. Her late husband Shamasha Yuash de Kelaita a cousin of late Mar Abimalek Timotheus, was active in helping Mar Timotheus in establishing our first Assyrian church in Chicago. He was Chairman of the reception committee at the Consecration of the late Mar Thoma Darmo a Metropolitan in the Mar Adhai Church, Turlock in 1952. He was my host in Turlock in 1967 and I visited him in his home in 1977. But he died before I visited Turlock in 1984. Her telephone call brought back to me nostalgic memories.

On Wednesday I had to go to San Francisco to get the plane to Minneapolis. We were a little late to start. I had earlier planned to drive through Daly City to say "hello" to my old friend and host of 1967 Rabbi Yuav Jacob. But when we telephoned it was announced that he was away as he was in 1977. So he went straight from Turlock to San Francisco. The sight on either side was beautiful. There were a lot of giant sized fans on the way to San Francisco. I think they are installed to generate electricity from the wind.

We just made it to the San Francisco airport. Our friend who was driving the car went to park. But before he came back I had to board the plane. Since the date was not written on the coupon of my VUSA (Visit USA) ticket I was not checked in at the entrance. I had to stand in a queue for the counter clerk to press my name in the computer and to check whether I had reservation. Unfortunately there were two flights at 11 a. m. I did not know which of the two was my flight. I remember only 11 a. m. flight to Minneapolis. When we purchase the VUSA ticket, the destination of each coupon is written already. But the dates and flight numbers could be reserved according to our convenience after we reach USA. But the tickets are to be purchased before we arrive in the USA.

As we boarded the air craft I heard the announcement that the North West Airlines is pleased to offer smoke-free environment to all its passengers. Most of the domestic flights have banned smoking on board. Some smokers can tolerate the ban for one or two hours. But sometimes the flight is delayed due to technical reasons after the passengers are boarded. Such delays make it more difficult for smokers to sit without smoking. My brother told me of his

friend who boarded the aircraft and got out to smoke when some delay for takeoff was announced. He had left his seat. While he was smoking outside the technical defect was rectified and the plane took off leaving our smoker free to smoke for more time.

About California, Galina Sidorova, a Russian traveller, writes in *New Times* (No. 33, August 1988).

“The state has virtually the highest standard of living in the country, maintained by developing the most modern industries chiefly electronic, and expanding ties with the Pacific nations. The Americans themselves call California the state of the 21st century.”

As an Indian from the south west coast of India. I was comfortable with the climate. As my sister-in-law Lalu stated “I wish our brother & sister living in Michigan and Ohio would shift to California rather than being frozen in the winter there.” Despite the cold climate more Indians live in Chicago and New York area rather than California.

For those going to the U. S. A. via Europe, New York is the nearest. Some went up to

Chicago. California was much farther. Even international flights flew to New York only in the early years. Then we had to travel by domestic airlines. From Kennedy international airport in New York we had to travel to La Guardia airport for catching a domestic flight. That is the old story. In 1984 I flew to Chicago direct without touching New York. This time I flew direct to Los Angeles without going to New York or Chicago. With new travel facilities the enterprising Indians may explore ways and means to colonise California. Recently in San Francisco and Los Angeles more Indians are seen. In Los Angeles a new congregation was formed for the Mar Thoma Syrian Church comprising of the Christians from Kerala. Even in San Diego, the southern most major city in California, Kerala people started coming. Recently they started a soccer team called Kerala 'Warriors' soccer team. I think some are suspicious of this nomenclature 'Warriors', because the Warriors are members of a sub caste of Hindus in Kerala. They use the spelling Warriar rather than Warrior. But there is no way of assigning a separate pronunciation for the word warrior or Warriar.

The Russian traveller mentioned above definitely likes California as is obvious from the following observation.

“But I would still risk calling California the state of the American Dream—because in its heavenly climate, on its fertile soil amidst the palms and the sequoias, dreams do not die. They turn into hopes.”

There are 106 community colleges in California. Many students go to the community colleges for two years, because there will not be room for every one at the University. Some go to the Universities after graduation from the High School. But others go to the community Colleges for two years and later, if they wish, some go to the University. My brother's second daughter Micky (Michelle) is going to a Community College in San Diego. After two years she will move to the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) where my sister's son Dr. Saji Alex went.

Although the climate is good, I do not jump to a hasty conclusion that California is the best place for everybody to live. The following remark of the recent Russian traveller is informative.

“There are many excellent artists of different schools. Avantgarde is blended with Indian and Mexican motives. If decadence is taken literally, then San

Francisco is known as the world's AIDS Capital. Probably no other city has so many homosexuals per square metre, entire blocks where they outnumber other residents, bars where they spend their free time, and an extremely tolerant public, albeit scared by AIDS. That too is a way of life."

The Indians in America have done economically well compared to other ethnic communities or Whites. Recently a study has been done by Peter Xenos, Herbert Barringer, and Michael Levin. An article in *Indian Express* dated 12 October 1988 entitled "Why Indians do well in US" by Kaushik Basu quotes from the conclusions of this study based on the informations collected from the 1980 census.

"According to the census, there are almost four lakh South Asians in the US and out of these 377 thousand are Asian Indians. If we break up the Indian population into language subgroups, we find that the largest group (130 thousand) speak Hindi. Gujarati is the next most popular language with 37 thousand people speaking it. This is followed by Punjabi (19 thousand), Bengali

(13 thousand) Malayalam (11 thousand) Tamil (10½ thousand) and other smaller groups.”

The number of Indians immigrating to the US also has increased considerably. In spite of the quota system which delays an applicant for several years, the number of South Asians going to the US are more than 30 thousand per year now.

“The remarkable feature about the South Asian population in America is its rapid growth. Between 1945 and 1965, only 7,629 immigrants went to the US from South Asia. Around 1965, three thousand South Asians were migrating to the US each year. By 1985 the figure had jumped to 30 thousand per year.

CHAPTER III

MINNEAPOLIS

Polly Reuling had adopted two girls from the Mar Timotheus Memorial Orphanage in India. Unny Mary is about eight years old now and Alice is about two. They were in the report to receive me. Unny Mary was happy to see me again. When I met her in Trichur I had promised her that one day I would visit her in her home in Minneapolis. Alice being small was a bit afraid of me. She began to cry. I guess that she was afraid of the thought that an Indian had come to take her back to India, the land of poverty from the home of affluence to which she was adopted.

Next day we strolled along the Mississippi river. From Minneapolis we walked to the town of St. Paul. Actually it is twin cities, Alice demanded her mother should carry her. Sometimes children are too demanding. The others have to yield to the unreasonable demands of the babies. You cannot reason

with them. They can cry louder and louder, the parents do not pay attention.

A sitar concert was arranged in the hall of the St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral. Some people, mostly Americans, had gathered together. I spoke about the history of our Church for half an hour. Then I sat on the floor like the famous sitar maestro Ravi Shankar and started playing the sitar for half an hour. I made it clear that I had learned sitar only for four years. I enquired whether anybody in the audience knew how to play sitar. An American present there told me that he had learned it in California. He has been playing it for 25 years. It was courteous of him to sit through the programme in spite of the poor quality of the performance of this beginner. A Keralite named Gordon Nampoodiripad took video. I do not know what he thought of me. I knew his relative Mr. Chitran Nampoodiripad living in Trichur after his retirement as the Joint Director of Education of Kerala State.

The next day I visited Dr. Akbar Haqqani, an associate of Dr. Billy Graham. He was my host during my 1977 trip to Minneapolis. Dr. Haqqani has been my close friend since we met at Kunnampulam, Kerala in 1971.

Dr. Doris Haqq is the wife of the Rev. Dr. Akbar Haqq. Mrs. Haqq is a doctor of medicine, a surgeon, a Fellow of Royal College of Surgeons (Edinburgh). We humourously remark that whenever patients ask, for Dr. Haqq, he points out her husband who is the well known Dr. Haqq. But his Ph. D in religions is not good for the body, although it may be good for the soul. It was nice to meet Mrs. Haqq after my visit to her home in 1977.

Jonathen, their son had grown tall. He was an 8 year young boy in 1977 when I rode his baby bicycle. It amused him to see me dressed in silk cassock, sliding in the park like little children. Now he is twenty doing his doctorate in Pharmacology having acquired the extra-curricular distinction of a black belt in Karate. He is the only boy at home, as the seven children (three boys and four girls) have already married and left home.

It was in a restaurant Dr. Haqq arranged lunch for me, Polly and two Indian girls Unny Mary and Alice. It was an expensive place. Fish is a speciality of that restaurant. Even before we glance through the menu, we realise that it is an expensive place indeed. They have exhibited live lobsters in glass cases like aquariums.

You point out the lobster you relish and they catch it and cook it for you while you wait. I personally am not very comfortable in these expensive restaurants, simply because it is very expensive. Not that it will affect my credit card, as I have never had a credit card either in India or abroad, but it *taxes* the credit card of my hosts.

The restaurant showed special consideration to children. They gave some puzzle sets and play things to the children. Unny Mary, although young, was curious to learn things. She was asking several questions to Dr. Haqq. Being a father and a grand father, the great preacher was at ease with her queries. Children ask intelligent questions too. She looked at the waitress and asked her "Do you like working here?" Whether she liked her job or not she replied in the positive to satisfy the little girl. I wondered whether, an American born girl would ask such a question and whether it was her Indian origin that made her so inquisitive.

The stay in Minneapolis this time was short compared to the 1977 visit. It was nice to spend time with Unny Mary and Alice. Since Alice was small (about 5 years old) she could not be very friendly to me. I was afraid of me. As we sat for supper I sat next to her

tried to tell her that I was a big baby sitter while studying in Princeton twenty years ago. I told her that all the American children I used to babysit are my friends. I guess she believed everything I said. I stretched my hand with a biscuit towards her. She took it from my hand and ate it.

Then I suggested to the two-year-old Alice that she should give me a biscuit. She was confident enough to offer it to me. I wanted to be smart and so instead of receiving it in my hand, I opened my mouth and told the little girl to put it in. As she saw my big mouth open she was really scared. She cried in a loud voice "You bite me, You bite me." I did not know how to comfort her. I defended myself stating that I did not bite her. But she would not stop crying. Why should I open my big mouth if I did not want to bite her. No logic would convince this child. Although I had boasted about my credentials as a babysitter in Princeton, I could not console this frightened child. Later, however, after I returned to India I received a letter from Polly Reuling in which she wrote that Alice enjoys singing.

Mar Aprem is very nice .

He went bite .

CHAPTER 4

CHICAGO

From Minneapolis to Chicago it was a short flight. It was in the afternoon of Friday 12th August. O' Hare airport in Chicago is known to me. When I made my first visit to Chicago in 1967 during the summer vacation between my two academic years in America, I went by train. But in 1977 I had been to O' Hare airport when I was received by archdeacon Sadok de Mar Shimun. In 1984 Rev. Awiqam and other members were at the airport.

Now as I reached the arrival area I could not find Rev. Awiqam whom I anticipated. But some Assyrian people met me and announced the arrival of the priest and Metropolitan Mar Narsai. They were delayed due to the traffic jam. Although I did not know the Assyrian people, some of them looked familiar to me.

In 1984 I was going to Chicago with great expectation of unity of two groups of our Church. Four years later now the reconciliation

spirit had vanished. Our people were very happy to see me.

St. Odisho Church at North Pulaski Road our new Church was purchased after my visit four years earlier. It was a factory which our Assyrian people had worked hard to remodel as a Church with altar etc. Since it was summer vacation, students were coming to the Church for classes in old Aramaic and modern Assyrian language. We had *Ramsha* evening prayer in the Church and a time of fellowship in the Church hall.

We walked to Monastero, a restaurant, for dinner. Mar Narsai Metropolitan was our host. As usual I ate little. I know restaurants are expensive. One old man came and played music on his piano accordion. I suppose he lives by tips the customers of that restaurant give him.

My stay of four days was arranged with Metropolitan Mar Narsai. The Church had rented an apartment for Mar Narsai just opposite to the Church in the North Pulaski Road. It was a good apartment with two bed rooms. He could walk across the street to the Church every evening for prayers and every Sunday morning

for Qurbana. Mar Narsai is the Metropolitan of Kirkuk in Iraq since Dec. 1969. In October 1968 it was my privilege to ordain him a priest.

Thomasulas had adopted two children from the Mar Thimotheus Memorial Orphanage. Ann and John are nice children and they are loved by the Thomasulas as their own biological children which they did not have. They were delighted to have me in their home.

Arlington Heights Public Library was the place arranged for my sitar concert by the Thomasulas. They had invited Al & Cindy Parry from Peoria to spend the week end with them. They had adopted a girl named "Kala" from the orphanage. In addition to these, there were others who had adopted children from Calcutta, Bangalore and others. It was a nice get together. I sat on the floor and played the *Ragas* and the Indian National Anthem. A Bengali family was there. They said that they enjoyed my sitar performance. But I did not believe them!

"Please keep your voice down" said an official from the library reading room. Being a saturday afternoon lots of people were reading there. And we were making noise in the adjacent room. It was not entirely my fault, because several children were running and making joyful noises.

After the sitar performance we moved to Chaupati Restaurant for Indian dinner. The food served there was good. The owner, his wife and two daughters were running the whole show cooking, serving etc. He told me that he had an apartment in Bombay overlooking Chaupati beach. That is why he called his restaurant in Chicago *Chaupati*. Some people may mistake the word Chaupati for *Chappati*. The second word means North Indian bread.

Since it was time for Vespers in the Church I rushed back. When I reached back I realised that the Assyrian standard time was different from the American standard time, so I was at least half an hour behind the schedule!

Ashurbanipal library is a recent attempt of some young Assyrian people to preserve the Assyrian literary heritage. They have photocopied & preserved some books on Assyrian Church culture which have gone out of circulation. King Ashurbanipal was not a Christian, as he lived before Christ. Yet all Assyrians are proud of Ashurbanipal. Hence this name for this new Assyrian library in Chicago.

Archdeacon Kaku Lazar of Iraq who was my *malpan* (teacher) in Aramaic language in India,

is now an Archdeacon in Chicago. He is, no doubt, one of the few Assyrian scholars now living. The other one is deacon Geevarghese Benjamin, an octogenerian who is also living in Chicago. He too was a *malpan* in India during 1929—33.

I was happy to speak at the Ashurbanipal library which was inaugurated by my teacher Archdeacon Kaku Lazar a few months earlier. Khoshaba Jassim Pnuel, who was actively involved with us along with his father-in-law Deacon Joseph Zaya of Syria in Bagdad in 1988, is now living in Chicago. His son is the President of this library. Although most of the members belonged to the opposite group, they were happy that I accepted their invitation to speak. Some members of our Church accompanied me to ensure my safety in the opposite camp! The Ashurbanipal library presented me with the copy of the newly reprinted *evangelion*, the portions of the gospels which are to be read in the Church.

On Sunday 14th August I celebrated holy Qurbana in St. Odisho Church which was full. Since that was the only Sunday for my congregation to see me, I stayed with them after the Qurbana for breakfast. Many people wanted to

talk with me. In my brief speech I outlined the proud heritage of our Church and encouraged our people to be faithful witnesses of our forefathers.

India's Independence Day is on 15th August. Since 15th was a Monday, the Indian community decided to celebrate it on Sunday, one day early. There was a parade through the streets.

David Oommen and his wife Lalitha had come to the Church. Lalitha is the sister of my youngest brother - in - law Cherian Puthicote. With them I went to see the Indian parade. Most of the states had floats in the procession. Some Indian kids were shouting the slogans *Jai Bharat* (Hail India). It was obvious that these American born Indian children did not know how to pronounce properly even the two Indian words they were shouting.

My eldest sister Leela too was in the Church. She had come from Jefferson City, Missouri to Chicago and was staying with David Oommen family in order to attend the Qurbana being conducted by me.

Dr. Roy from Mepral, near Thiruvalla was here in the parade. He had worked in England earlier with my second brother - in - law

Dr. N. V. George. As I was meeting him for the first time, I thought he did not know much about me. But to my surprise he told me that he had read some of my books. We cracked several jokes which were in my book *Bishop's Jokes*.

There was a farewell dinner in the Church the same evening. Hence we had to finish the tasty Indian curry in a hurry in order to rush for the dinner in the church. I took a few minutes to play the piano in the house of David Oommen which his daughters Anju, Manju, and Sanju were playing. My sister Leela as well as David Oommen and wife attended the farewell dinner to represent India. The young and old were there to bid farewell to me. Yes it was a short visit. From Friday to Tuesday. Since it was the part of a long tour I could not spare more time than this.

On Monday morning Mar Narsai and I went for a stroll. We saw a Catholic Church, St. Marys. We walked in. No priests were there. We saw a lady working in the office. We introduced ourselves lest we should be mistaken to be some intruders. That morning walk was a good exercise.

Mrs. Margaret Baba Paul is my friend. That was my "house" during my first visit to Chicago.

1967. She is old now and her husband Mr. Baba ul had passed away. She is living alone. Her son Alex Paul came to the Church and took me to his mother's house. We planned that after visiting Margaret, Alex would take me to his house.

At 11 p. m, the telephone rang. The neighbour was asking Margaret why her lights were still on. Was anything wrong in the house? Was she sick? She laughed and told her neighbour that she was okay. But she had a visitor who would not stop talking. As a matter of fact I am not sure who would win in such a competition. She too had a lot to talk with me about the old country, Persia.

We had a lot to share. In this case the blame could be shared by both. Since Margaret had been in America for several decades, there was no language problem. She recalled the days she had spent in Bombay and then in Calcutta en route to America. They came as refugees from Iraq in a British ship and landed in Bombay. She was a young girl then. I think the event was in 1919 or so after the first World War.

Although Alex wanted to take me to his house also, after 11 p. m., the idea was dropped.

He said to me in "your next trip you can visit me home." Since I had not visited them in 1984 I had felt an obligation to meet them. They were not members of our Church. They are members of the Assyrian Pentecostal Church. Margaret told me that occasionally she attended service at our Church too.

Two friends I wanted to visit was Professor Arthur Voobus, an exile from Estonia who was a Professor in Chicago Lutheran School of Theology. He had translated my song 'Behold the Cross of Calvary' to Estonian language. He is one of the most universally known Syriac scholars. He has translated several books from Syriac language into English. Although I managed to get his home address and telephone number there was no time to fix an appointment. In 1984 I fixed an appointment to see his Museum of Syriac MSS, but there was not enough time. He had told me at that time "Do not drop in a hurry. You need a lot of time to see these Syriac manuscripts." In August 1988 too I was sad that I could not find time to visit the library. But I was sadder still when I learned later that Dr. Voobus passed away in September.

Deacon Geevarghese Benjamin was another Syriac scholar whom I had wanted to visit. He was my host in Mosul in 1962. I had visited his

house in Chicago in 1977 when he was away. In 1984 he had come to attend the reception to Patriarch Mar Adhai II. It was disappointing not to find time to meet old friends who had passed 80 years, as I do not know whether they would be living, if and when I visit Chicago again. I had translated my book *Mar Abimalec himotheus* to Assyrian language and has published it in Chicago.

Assyrians from Canada came to visit Mar Narsai and me. They wanted to start a Church for the old calendar people, i.e. Christmas on January 7th. They requested a letter from Mar Narsai Metropolitan to authorize an organizing committee to collect funds for building a Church under the authority of Patriarch Mar Adhai II of Baghdad. Since Mar Narsai did not know enough English, my services were required. After I drafted it I realised that nobody except my own typist in India could easily read my handwriting, therefore I offered to type it myself. Then only realised that I had not done this job for many years. Moreover the typewriter in the Church was electrical and not the usual one with which I am familiar. A light touch of my finger, can make a big mistake. Thus carefully I used the electric typewriter for the first time.

CHAPTER V

ANN ARBOR

My brother Addison was busy but elder sister Leela had come from Missouri to stay with my brother's wife Molly to welcome me during my visit to Ann Arbor. At Detroit airport I could not find any of my people. Hence I collected my baggage and came out. Besides the two ladies (Leela and Molly) my brother's children Aprem and Grace Mary were there looking for me. The two year old niece was either scared of me or my beard.

Ann Arbor is about an hour's drive from Detroit. We had a lot to talk. I did not get tired of talking about members of our family in India. Then I had to share the news about my sister's family in England and brother's family in California whom I had just visited.

"Modern Technology" announced my nephew Aprem as he pressed the button of the remote control to open the gate of the garage so that we could reach inside the building and enter

through the kitchen door. Aprem was sure that there was no such device in India. But I did not express any surprise at that remote control mechanism, because I had seen it with my sister in 1984 when I had visited her home in Jefferson City, Missouri.

Aprem went to Bible class and came back with a problem. His classmate told him that his house was leaking. When we sat for supper Aprem would not eat his food. When his mother Molly asked him the cause of his "hunger strike", he said that it pained him to see his friend suffering. We told him that it is good to be sympathetic, but he should not abstain from food. He would be hungry. When his mother assured him that she would find a solution to the problem of his friend, he demanded to know what it was. She explained that she would call the Sunday school teacher to find out the problem and perhaps call the pastor of the church to look for a solution. I am not sure whether the boy believed that his mummy would do all that for his friend. Finally he agreed to eat. Still this feeling of concern for his friend (whose name he had not enquired) was in his mind when he got up from the dining table. I observed that young people have more concern for the suffering of others

than the older people. Referring to this quality of concern for the poor, his parents later remarked that "he is fit to be a bishop".

The second child Grace Mary was slow to come close to her bearded uncle. I had baptised her in Trichur. She could not pronounce properly her brother's name Aprem (same as my name). She calls him appu. I wonder whether she will call me "Mar Appu", as Aprem is Appu to her. She refers to herself as Baby. She knows that it is not her name. But that is the easier way to answer those who ask her name. Baby likes TV programmes. As soon as she gets up in the morning she is placed in front of the TV. Her mother puts on the "Sesame Street" programme meant for children. If the programme is over she cries loud until somebody comes and rewinds it and puts it on again or puts another video film of Sesame Street.

Addison telephoned from his conference venue to make sure that every thing was okay. Since our eldest sister Leela was there, he knew that I had enough company. He was very anxious to see me. When he arrived in New York in 1968 I had gone from Princeton to receive him and send him to my sister Leela who was in Mount Pleasant, Michigan. A day later when he

me we talked about a lot of things. Leela is No. 2 and Addison is No. 8. I am somewhere in the middle being No. 4 of a large family of 10 children. Then we realised it was past 2 a.m. We decided to go to bed postponing the remaining topics for the next day. Since beginning seminary studies, I did not get much time to be with the family members and to be in touch with them even through correspondence.

Dr. Davy Emmatty in Bowling Green, Ohio is a member of our Church in Trichur. In 1977 after Easter Qurbana in Chicago Dr. Davy and family drove me to Bowling Green and I spent 10 days with him. During my 1984 trip I did not have time to visit him. Hence he and his wife Tracy came to meet me at the airport in Cleveland, Ohio. This time I wished to visit his house because about seven weeks earlier I had conducted the funeral of his father in Trichur. His son Anil is taller than his father, a real change since I saw him in 1977. Now they live in a bigger house in Bowling Green itself. I must admit that many Indians live like Americans in affluence.

There was a get-together of our Church members from Trichur. The friends in Canada could easily come to Ann Arbor while I could not go there as I had no visa to visit Canada.

Actually I have been to Canada only once, though not too for a day only. That was in 1977. Therefore I wished to go to Canada. Owing to lack of time, as well as visa problem, I had to be satisfied with meeting the Canada friends in Ann Arbor.

Sunny V. Nallengara, is the younger brother of my second brother - in - law Dr. N. V. George of England. Sunny is an Engineer. His wife Shantha was working on that Saturday. Still they drove after 4 p. m. and reached Ann Arbor before 9 p. m. I was surprised when they returned home after midnight. Long distance driving is not that bad in America, as cars are well equipped and roads are excellent.

When Sunny was in the house we read the description I had written in my travelogue written in 1977 entitled *America Revisited* about how we missed the flight after the panicky drive we had to Buffalo airport after visiting the Niagara Falls. It was amusing to the youngsters to read that Sunny had panicked when we missed the exit and the dog in the neighbouring car began to bark at us.

Tony Emmatty is the nephew of Sunny Nallengara. Tony and Molly are new comers in Canada in the sense that Tony had arrived in

Canada after my 1977 visit. How many years later, I cannot recall. It was nice to see their baby born in Canada.

Ignatius (Chinnan) Mooken and family were other guests of that evening. Chinnan Mooken's home was one of the three homes I visited during the one and a half day's visit to Canada in 1977. He is my second cousin. His wife Molly is the second cousin of my brother Addison's wife Molly. So they are doubly related to me.

When Dr. Davy Emmatty, Sunny Nallengara, Tony Emmatty, Chinnan Mooken and their families gathered at my brother's house we had prayer, food, sitar music, gossip etc. I had thought of conducting a holy communion service. But as per our Church regulations I cannot celebrate communion service without the assistance of a deacon. Still our gathering was a fellowship of people born and brought up in ancient Christian tradition in Kerala now living in U.S.A. and Canada in an entirely different culture. We had not changed much. But what about the next generation? The youngsters in our gathering gathered around the TV and talked about the topics of their interest.

David Lazar is an Assyrian living in Michigan himself. Since I did not have his telephone

number it was not easy to contact him. If I knew the area code we could easily enquire the telephone number from the "enquiry". From the address it was not clear. As it could be one of the two area codes in that area., Leela, my sister, offered to help. Living in the USA for more than a quarter of a century she had become very practical. She called the "enquiry" number and gave the address stating emphatically that it was in the same area code of our brother's house. This was just a chance trial she said. If it is correct the telephone operator will find it out. Even if it is wrong she will help us, if she is a nice person. If she is not a nice person, she will say that there is no such address listed in that area code. Still we have nothing to lose. When the operator gave the number there was a triumphant look on my sister's face.

"Mar Aprem speaking", announced I as soon as the caller answered my telephone call. I could sense silence and surprise at the other end. "Mar Aprem from India speaking." What a pleasant surprise to him. We had never met. Through *Voice of the East* I was known to him. Therefore we were not total strangers. Although an Assyrian, David Lazar had been living in the USA for a long time. He was a teacher by profession and his English was perfect. W

decided to meet. Should I go to him or would he come to me? Considering the shortage of time he offered to come to me.

He came with his young son. We talked like friends, although it was the first time we were meeting. He knew a lot about the late Mar Thoma Darmo who was my predecessor in India during 1952-68. We talked about our church. We made instant friendship.

My sister Leela's son Saji had just completed his medical degree. In 1984 he had come to meet me, at St. Louis, Missouri. We drove off to Jefferson City after dropping him at his medical school at St. Louis. Now I was happy to hear that he had graduated. But he was busy at his hospital. He telephoned me twice. Realising that he was busy I told him that he need not travel a long distance to come to Ann Arbor to meet me. Dr. Saji Alex is a quiet boy. I remember him in 1966, twenty two years ago, when I visited them at Mount Pleasant. Saji was probably five years old. He was happy to meet his uncle, the first relative he was seeing in America after he had gone to America to join his father while he was about 2 years old. He had forgotten the little Malayalam he had learned as a baby. Still he wanted to exhibit

his knowledge to me. "Uncle, do you know what is *Kathi*?" I told him that it means knife in our mother tongue.

Leela's daughter Asha was born after I became bishop. She is the first among my nephews & nieces to be born after my consecration as Bishop. Ten others were born after her during the last 18 years. Thus my mother now has ten children and 20 grand children. Asha was born in America and grew up a real American perhaps the most American among all my relatives. Until she graduated from the High School my sister used to pay much attention to her. Now she is independent staying in the hostel in Ann Arbor away from the parents like most American girls.

Prof. Alexander V. Alex, Leela's husband is a professor of economics. He taught for many years in central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant and later at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri. In 1966 when I visited them Dr. Alex was in Michigan and in 1977 and 1984 he was teaching in the Jefferson City. Now he has again shifted to Portsmouth Ohio. Changing jobs from place to place is more common in America than in India. Alex and Asha went to Kerala while I was in the U. S. A. and they were to return on Sept. 1 when I was returning. So we must have passed each other in the air somewhere above the Atlantic.

CHAPTER VI

BOSTON TO NEW YORK

Streeter Stuart and his daughter Miss Twyla Stuart were waiting for me at the airport in Boston. Streeter Stuart Sr and his son Rev. Mr. Streeter Jr had preached in Trichur in Feb. 1975. I was their guest in Boston in 1977 and I could not visit them in 1984 as I did not visit Boston in that trip. Therefore I did not want to miss the opportunity to visit this family once again although I could not find more than one free day in my busy schedule.

From the Boston airport we went straight to Lexington where the Stuarts lived. Mrs. Merle Stuart was about 80 years old and still strong. She was so happy to see me. She had accompanied her husband to India and was my guest in Trichur.

There was Piano in the sitting room. So I played some songs such as "Holy Holy Holy Lord God Almighty.....", "What a friend we have in Jesus....." etc. Then I sat on the floor, opened my box, and began to play my

sitar. Streeter Stuart got his tape recorder and taped my sitar recital. He took some photographs as I was sitting in the style of sitar *maestro* Ravi Shankar. The way he appreciated my sitar performance makes me suspect that he has never heard before sitar music, and therefore what I witnessed that day he thought was a superb performance! He gave me a copy of the recording he made. I hope that he will not give it to anybody who knows Indian music. If he does he will be told that it was only an amateurish version of sitar music. I never claim perfection especially in music.

We went to a Chinese restaurant near the house for our lunch. The place was full of people. While ordering the items of our choice 'Twylla said "let me look at the price before order." This is the first time I heard an American saying it. I appreciated her genuine concern in wasting money unnecessarily. Sometimes people order more than they need. I have seen my friends in India also order food without counting the cost, because they know that the organizers of the meeting or conference do pay it and it does not hurt their pockets. Some people do not care to check whether the bill they sign is correct or not. As a Christian living in a poor country I believe that we should not look

or 5 star comforts as far as possible. Some of us have lost the virtue of simplicity and austerity in our life style.

“We sleep early because next morning we have to work” announced Twyla’s parents who had passed their retirement age. Still they work hard. They have their own store *Belmont Nutrition Centre*. Twyla and her parents work here. Since trucks were arriving with supplies on Monday morning they had to be there in the store. I appreciated their disposition for hard work. Both their sons are Reverend Doctors and well settled in life. Dr. Doug Stuart was the Director of Admission at Gordon Conwell Seminary where he arranged for me to speak in 1977; the year in which the son of the President of the United States (Gerald Ford) was graduating.

Streeter Stuart Jr telephoned me renewing our friendship of during his evangelistic Crusade in Trichur in 1975 which was the biggest gathering in Trichur consisting of 17000 (seventeen thousand) people on the closing day. Perhaps it was the largest audience to which Streeter Stuart spoke in his life. I understand that except that of Dr. Billy Graham’s there are not many large evangelistic meetings. In the U. S. A. Streeter expressed desire to visit Trichur once more and preach.

The only daughter Twyla is a B.A., B. Divinity graduate of the Princeton Theological Seminary. She was a student there when I was doing my first year of Doctor of Theology (Th. D.) at Princeton in 1967—68. Twyla was friendly with most of the foreign students at Princeton. She did not become a priest or priestess, but worked with her parents in their store and lived as a Christian in a secular world. She was sorry that her fellow Americans could not claim to be worthy of their forefathers in moral standards, etc. She said that she did not waste time watching TV, as they did not keep high moral standards.

Dukakis house was somewhere near the Kennedy house. “Is Dukakis house in this street?” enquired Twyla to a police man standing in a small street. He pointed to the house where three security officers (one of them a woman) were standing with walki-talky. Special security at Dukakis house was due to the fact it is not only the house where the Governor of the state was residing, but also Dukakis was the Presidential candidate, the one who could be the President of the U. S. A. (These words are recorded after Dukakis lost the election). As the security men looked at me in suspicion because of my bearing, I identified myself as one coming from India.

curious to see Dukakis home among many other things. I made this clear to avoid police patrol cars chasing our car. A bearded black man looking at the house of a Presidential candidate could be considered a serious security risk. Of course, I do not know how to pull the trigger even if a loaded pistol is placed in my hands.

My classmate Dr. Miss Maggie Schatkin was a professor of Boston College. She joined Princeton for Th. D after earning a doctorate from Fordham University. Miss Schatkin, a Lutheran, was a professor at this Catholic College. I went to her office. But she was not there. We left a note at her door. It would have been a great pleasure to meet a classmate after two decades. Being busy people we never get time to keep correspondence. Professor Schatkin has grown in academic field, while as a Bishop I could not rise much in academic field. Yes, if I stop writing travelogues like these, perhaps I could prepare a scholarly paper or conduct post-doctoral research.

From Boston College we went to the Boston University. We had only a few minutes. So we almost ran to the Religion Department and went to the office of the head of the Department. I was so delighted to read the name Dr. Leroy S. Rouner. During my M.Th. studies

in the United Theological College, Bangalore (1964 - 66), I was in the fellowship group with Dr. Lee Rouner. It was he who recommended me for studies in the USA in 1966. But during my two years studies in New York and Princeton, Dr. Rouner was in Bangalore. As I had heard that Dr. Rouner had joined Boston University with great expectation I knocked at his door. He was not there and I had no time to go to his house. Hence I left his office hoping to meet him the next time.

Dr. George Bebis who was with me in the 1962 summer course at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, near Geneva, Switzerland, was professor at the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Theological College in Brookline near Boston. I enquired the way to the Seminary and decided to say "hello" to that friend after 26 years. Since Dr. Bebis had written his Ph.D. thesis on Nestorius at the university of Athens, in Greek language, I felt some closeness, being a member of the church nicknamed Nestorian. When we realised that it would take some more minutes before we reach the Greek Seminary we decided to drive in the direction of the airport.

My loving fatherly host Streeter Stuart suggested that I should eat something before flying to New York. We got into a restaurant and ordered the quickest food and ate it fast.

NEW YORK

As we drove from Kennedy airport to the apartment of my host in 173rd street in Broadway I recognized the familiar places. When I had studied in the Union Theological Seminary I was near the 120th street in Broadway. I used to walk through the Haarlem area upto 130th or 140th street. It was nice to be in a familiar place. It would have been nicer still if I could meet familiar people. One method of doing it was to walk to the Union Seminary. But it was on summer vacation. Therefore I would not meet many people.

Most of my teachers such as Professors Cyril C. Richardson, Wilhelm Pauck, Hoekendijk *et al* had passed away. Hoekendijk's widow Dr. Letty M Russel who was my classmate is a professor there now. We received STM degree together in 1967. My neighbour in the 6th floor of the hostel who was a Th. D. student, John Koening is a professor of New Testament in the same Seminary. Another student residing in a room adjacent to mine was Fr. Anton Veer Kamp a Jesuit priest from Holland. Later I learned that this priest married and became a layman. I guess that scholar must be teaching in some Theological Seminary.

Soo Min Lee was staying in the same host just below me. He was the YMCA Secretary from Seoul, Korea. Being Asians we felt close to each other among the students who took S. T. M. degree in 1967. I wondered what use he was going to make with his Master's degree in Systematic Theology in his work as a secretary of the YMCA in Seoul. But two years ago I was pleasantly surprised to read in the newspaper that an Asian had been elected to the highest post of the YMCA. It is for the first time an Asian is appointed as the Secretary General of the world Alliance of the YMCA which has its headquarters in Geneva. It was none other than Soo Min Lee. I wrote to my old friend Lee Soo Min and renewed our friendship. Many of my classmates may be in good position scattered all around the world.

Another Seminary I missed in this trip was Princeton Theological Seminary where I spent the first year of Th. D. programme in 1967—68. During my 1977 visit I had gone there and met the President of the Seminary Dr. James Mc Cormack as well as the former President Dr. John Mackay. Princeton is only one hour's drive from New York driving through the tunnel of the Hudson river to the State of New Jersey. But my stay

n New York was only for one day, just like that n Boston. Therefore I had to be content with postponing the visit to my *alma mater* to a future occasion.

Forgetting Princeton I wished to visit our Church members in New York. Ignatius Pallengara, cousin of my brother-in-law, was my host in 1977. There was no time to visit him as his house was far from where I was. But there was a new comer, Dr. James K. R., staying in the same street. I visited his house for ten minutes.

Geevarghese Emmatty's apartment was the same I visited in 1977. At that time their children were in India. Now all the four of them, two boys and two girls, have joined their parents in America. The eldest graduated from the High School. Her name is Mini. She has a Malayalee friend, another Mini. I call her mini Mini, as she looks a little younger than the other Mini.

Thermadom Valsan is another member of our church in Trichur living in New York. His wife too is a nurse. I had conducted their wedding several years ago in Trichur. It was nice to meet them and their three children in their spacious house where I was invited for lunch. There were other guests too for sharing the

Malayalee food. We cracked some jokes from my two books of humour.

My two hosts Thermadoms and Emmatt took me to the airport. When I was checking in at Kennedy airport, a Sardarji remarked pointing to my sitar "You must be making a lot of money by that instrument." He did not know that I am only a beginner and nobody paid to listen to a novice.

The clerk at the counter looked at my passport and told me that I did not have visa for Holland. I had to explain to her that Benelex visa meant Belgium, Netherlands and Luxumbourg. Holland is another name of Netherlands. Finally she agreed to let me travel to Netherlands.

CHAPTER VII

TO BELGIUM

My attraction in visiting Belgium was to be the guest of Mr. Joseph Webber, President of the Infants de la Paix in Welkenraedt. The second interest was to participate in the *Symposium Syriacum* which was scheduled to meet in the Katholieke Universiteit in Leuven. Ofcourse I was excited about this part of my itinerary because I had not visited Belgium so far even when I was in Holland, Germany and such neighbouring countries.

Coming from Holland, visa was no problem. My Benelex visa was valid for three countries Belgium, Netherlands(Holland) and Lexumbourg. My host in Holland drove me to Belgium. I offered to go by bus. But he was willing to drive me. When I enquired whether the expense of the car ride would be more than the bus or train, he told me that since his car runs on gas and not on petrol or diesel, it would not cost him much.

Although we crossed the border to Belgium without much difficulty we took a long time to find out Welkenraedt, the little town of about 8,500 people. We were close to the German

border and I warned my host not to stray into the German territory, as I had no German visa. The directions on a sign board pointed out Aachen in Germany. So we tried to take the opposite route. So it transpired that instead of three hours it took us about five hours to reach our destination.

When we reached the little town of Welkenraedt there was no difficulty in locating the house of my Belgian host Mr. Joseph Webber. He was anxiously waiting for me. After a tedious car journey I was happy to be at home. Mr. Webber has adopted two Indian boys in addition to his own daughter. Mr. Webber was very kind to give me good food which means fish, as I do not eat meat.

Next day, Saturday 27 August, was a big day in my life. I was to give a sitar concert. There was big publicity with big photo on the posters. Before the big event in the evening Mr. Webber took me in the morning to the Henri - Chapelle American Cemetery and Memorial which was near his home town. Some American tourists were present there to visit the tombs of the Americans who died in the IInd World War. On some tombs instead of a cross I noticed another symbol. Mr. Webber who understood my questioning look told me that

those were the tombs of the Jewish Americans who died in the war. Ofcourse the Jews were very few among the nearly eight thousand (7989 to be exact) soldiers buried there.

About the American Cemetery I quote below from a leaflet available there:—

“This cemetery was named “Henri-Chapelle” after the historical village of the same name which lies on the main highway between Liege, Belgium and Aachen, Germany. The village of Henri-Chapelle received its name in the year 1172 by official charter from Henri III, the Duc de Limbourg. Also of interest, the church in the village of Henri-Chapelle is in “Ogive Style” - dome “Romane” and dates back to the 17th Century. It is considered a historical site.

This cemetery, covering 57 acres, was established in September 1944 by the U. S. Ist Infantry Division of the Ist Army, as a combat burial site. The cemetery and memorial were completed in 1960 and dedications were held on 9 July of that year.

This cemetery commemorates the fallen soldiers of two periods of fighting. One period covers the Ist Army’s drive in September of 1944 through northern France into Belgium Holland, Luxembourg and Germany. The other

period covers the bitter "Battle of the Bulge" fighting when this region was overrun by the enemy and this site became a front line defense post. Soldiers formerly buried in the temporary cemeteries at Fosse (near Number) and Foy (near Bastogne), Belgium, are permanently interred here. The temporary cemeteries at Foy, also a battlefield site, contained the remains of 2,700 War Dead who gave their lives during the "Battle of the Bulge".

At this cemetery rest 7,989 of our military Dead most of whom gave their lives in the repulse of the German counter-offensive in the Ardennes or during the advance into, and across Germany during the Fall and Winter of 1944 and the spring of 1945. Others were lost in air operations over this region."

"During the "Battle of the Bulge", enemy troops dressed in American uniforms, penetrated as far as the village of Henri-Chapelle and the immediate vicinity where they were captured

West of the highway which passes through the reservation is the overlook and one of the flagpoles. The roadway to the overlook is lined with Linden trees. In the cemetery area, there is a total of 1,615 meters of hawthorn hedge, 950 meters of boxwood hedge and 24 rhododendron beds.

The overlook provides a beautiful view of the rolling countryside and the distant church steeples, known as the valley of the "Berwinne" and the "Plateau de Herve", also once a battlefield.

The approach to the colonnade is flanked with massifs of red and pink polyantha roses, bordered with Iris and Nepeta. Adjoining the colonnade itself are to be found other massifs of white polyantha roses, in association with seasonal flowers, usually petunias and geraniums, while spreading yews accent the transition from colonnade to chapel and museum.

The setting of a fine grass terrace, surrounded by clipped box hedging does much to enhance the effectiveness of the memorial itself. The groups of weeping willows planted at each end of the memorial have been designed to provide relieving masses of foliage which brighten still more the total architectural composition."

Then we visited the ancient Catholic monastery, the oldest in Belgium. That afternoon we attended the reception given to the new parish priest in Welkenraedt. The parishioners were happy to receive a new priest. Some nuns whom I met there told me that they had a home in Kerala. I told them that I had heard about

the Kerala nun Sister Alice of a Belgian religious order who created a furore by fasting for the rights of fishermen in Kerala. They smiled and spoke something to the other nuns in French language which I did not understand.

The biggest event of my Belgium visit was the *Concert de Cithare* at the cultural centre which was like our town hall. There was a reception for me. The Mayor of Welkenraet who was also a member of the Belgian Parliament. Mr. Grojean was present. The Bishop of Leuven sent his Chaplain Fr. Baudouine to represent him at his reception function. The newspaper camera men took my photo with my sitar which came in newspapers the next morning.

The climax was when I sat on the floor with the sitar maestro Ravi Shankar with his instrument at my side. I was praying that I would be able to play for about an hour as announced earlier. There was no accompaniment, no *tabla*, or drum. Actually I had planned to play that way, as I am well aware that I cannot play tied down to the speed of the drum. I always go fast. But here was I in front of a patient audience with an Indian instrument with which I “played, exotic Western songs “Jingle bells”, “Silent Night, Holy Night”, “Freire Jacques”, “Holy Holy Holy” etc. The audience afterwards told me that it was okay. I understood that playing *sitar* was not easy as preaching!

The next morning Mr. & Mrs. Webber took me to the Catholic Church at Chereneux.

ereneux is much smaller than Welkenraedt. Webber had made arrangements with Mr. Eric Constant, a medical student who had stayed some time in the Mar Timotheus Memorial Hospital in Kalathode, Trichur to look after me. Eric is the organist in the Church. He made all the arrangements to make my visit to my hometown a memorable experience.

Everybody in the packed Church knew me. My photo was printed on the service programme booklet for the day. My song "Behold the Cross at Calvary" which was translated to French was sung by the choir. Special songs were composed for the occasion. Eric had arranged his cousin Mr. Joseph Longton to sit by my side and to give me a running commentary of the service. He interpreted my speech also for the congregation who did not understand English. My interpreter knew about all eastern churches including ours. He presented me the book he has authored *Fils D' Abraham* (Sons of Abraham).

The priest caught my attention. He was ecumenical not only in words but deeds. I was surprised that he showed so much respect to a bishop from a non-Catholic Church. I could hear when the prayers were said, the mention of my name "we pray for our Pope, John Paul II, the bishop of Liege and Bishop Mar Aprem of the Orthodox Church in South India."

When the choir sang the specially composed song "the children of Calcutta....." they felt

the real presence of a bishop from India in the midst. They have all heard about Calcutta because of Mother Teresa. I was privileged to play some devotional tunes on my sitar when the communion was being given to the people. Many worshippers later said that my playing was good and wanted a tape of it. It sounds so incredible to me that I was taken to the Church in the afternoon to record my playing the sitar.

A reception was arranged in the rectory after the service. A big lunch at the house of Eric Constant waited me, his mother was happy to feed me realising that my mother had fed her son while in India. An exchange of hospitality. The good priest walked into the house of Eric to pay his respects to me once again, although he was busy on that Sunday. Recently a Vietnamese priest was given to assist him. Although people often think that the priests have an easy leisurely life, I find the contrary often to those willing to work.

Before I left Chereneux Eric Constant, the organist, offered to buy my sitar. He said that he wanted to learn *sitar*. I do not know whether his intention was to stop me from playing sitar so that I will not trouble others by my playing. For his information I must record here that I bought another sitar in India and started playing it!

CHAPTER VIII

SYRIAC SYMPOSIUM

The 5th *Symposium Syriacum* was held in Catholic University in Louvain, Belgium on 28th to 31st August 1988. I had presented papers in the 3rd & 4th symposiums held in September in Germany and in Sept 1984 in Groningen, Holland. In 1984 although it was arranged in Catholic University of Groningen, only one public conference was held in the University. The main conference was in a small village called Berghesdal where there is no railway line.

Some details of the 1980 Syriac Symposium are mentioned in my autobiography entitled *Strange But True*'. The 1984 report appeared in my travelogue called *From Bagdad to Chicago*. I could not attend the first two symposiums at Bonn and Rome in 1972 and 1976. Those who are interested to know more about these Syriac Symposiums can read the reports and papers which were published from Rome in *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*. They are usually published one or three years after the event.

Many friends from all over the world attended these meetings. 1988 had the largest number of participants. More than hundred scholars were there. Dr. Sebastian Brock from Oxford, Chip Coakley from Lancaster, Professor M. Dr. Kathleen McVey from Princeton. Father E.R. Hambye from Rome, Fr. Petros You from France, Fr. Joseph Habbi from Iraq, Professor W. Hage of Marburg, Fr. I.H. Dalm from Paris, and Fr. John Sanders from Amsterdam, Prof. H.J.W. Drijvers of Groning are some of my foreign friends whom I met for the third time having been together in 1980 and 1984.

One foreign Professor with whom I had established friendship in 1980 and 1984 who could not make it to the 1988 Symposium was Professor Rafaat Ebied of Egypt, now head of the Dept of Semitic Languages at the University of Sydney, Australia. But I had the privilege of being to his home in Sydney in 1987 and 1989 and I have written about him in my books *Australian Assyrians* (1988) and *From Sydney to Canberra* (1989). Prof. Ebied is planning a busy schedule not to miss the next Symposium in Cambridge, England in 1992 as he himself had taught in England for several years.

Among Indian friends Fr. George Nedungatt J. of Rome Fr. Kollaparambil of Rome, . Jacob Vellian of Kottayam, Fr. Jacob kkeparambil of St. Ephrem's Ecumenical Research Institute of Kottayam, Fr. Geevarghese mediath of Vadavathur Seminary, Fr. Louis oleveetil O. I. C., Fr. Antony Vallavanthara MI of Louvain, Fr. M. K. Thomas of Erlangen, Germany *et al* were there. The last one mentioned is Syrian Orthodox (Jacobite) and the others are Catholics of Syro- Malabar and Syro- Malankara Rites.

Since I was busy prior to the Symposium I did not prepare any paper. I attended almost all meetings shifting from one group to the other. There were two groups of sessions going on simultaneously because of the large number of papers to be read. I shifted from group to group looking for the English papers. When both groups had French and German I chose the better topic or better paper reader as both German and French were Latin and Greek to me.

The photo of St. Ephrem the Syrian was in one of the papers read in the Symposium about early Christian music. Since I had never seen the photo of Saint Ephrem whose name was

given to me at the time of consecration as Bishop on 21st Sept 1968 at Bagdad, I was speculating whether he had a beard etc. The photo I had of a man with beard. I have no idea how it is, as there was no camera at that time. I do not know whether anybody had painted him while he was alive in the 4th century.

The Syrian Orthodox Church had a small delegation. Metropolitan Mar Julius Chakkal of Saint Efreem Klooster in Glane-Losser, Holland was there with several of his Syriac books printed in his Press in Holland. He is a good scholar. He wrote the whole Bible himself and printed it in offset. I bought a copy of the book written by Maphrian Mar Gregory Abul Farag of the 13th century entitled *The Laughable Stories*.

Malpano Abraham Nouro of Aleppo, who had been to Trichur during the time of predecessor the late Mar Thoma Darmo, was happy to see me. He has since published a book in 1989 to help learn Syriac language in west Syriac script, with the help of pictures. The fruits of his labour of nearly 40 years. Although a layman, Professor Abraham Nouro has done much to promote Syriac language. I should say Abrohom instead of Abraham, as the Syrians pronounce 'a' as 'o'. 'Mar' becomes 'Mor'.

A young engineer, George Anton Kiraz from Hollywood, California originally from Bethlehem presented a paper entitled "Computers: innovation and New future to Syriac studies". His idea was not only an academic discussion but advertisement for his *Alaph Beth Computer Symstems*, (P. O. Box 74628, Los Angeles, Calif 900 04, USA.) For Indian standards computerisation in Syriac studies is an expensive proposition. I bought a small disc of 14 or so Syriac tunes which costs \$ 50. He has a *Syriac Primer* which helps the beginner to learn reading, writing vocabulary and grammar with oral exercises on an accompanying audio - cassette.

Mr & Mrs E. Peteers invited the delegates to a dinner specially arranged for the participants of *Symposium Syriacum* in "Salons Georges" in Hogeschoolplein in Leuven. It was an expensive dinner. My Kerala friend guessed that each plate cost Rs. 1000. For 100 participants it is 1,00,000 rupees or 6400 US dollars. As I was speculating why Mr & Mrs Peteers should spend so much money for us, my friend stated that several of the Syriac scholars are authors of the books he publishes. Although his publications are highly priced, he does not pay much royalty to the authors. Compared to the profits he makes from his books, a dinner costing a

hundred thousand rupees is nothing. Moreo many of us would buy his books as Peteers Pr had a sales table in our conference centre. bought six books. The cost was about Rs. 2 I could have bought 60 books with that amo in India. Normally I would not, or could n have bought them. But since the *Sym Symposium* authorities were kind enough not charge me the conference fee this time and treat me as a guest, I could use that much mo for buying these useful books.

The venue of this 5th Symposium was Katholieke Universitait, in Louvain. We w accommodated in Paus Adrian VI Colle. Some lectures were held in the adjoining instit ion called Maria - Theresia College. KU h nearly 600 years of tradition behind it.

The city of Leuven petitioned for University. Duke John IV of Brabant support the request. The KU was founded on 9 Dec 14 by Papal Bull issued by Pope Martin V. It the oldest Catholic University in the wor today. Originally it had 3 facilties: Ar Canon and Civil Law, and Medicine. T faculty of theology was added in 1432. No about 1350 foreign students from 85 nationaliti study in this University. KU has five universi

hospitals with "a total capacity of good 1900 acute beds and 400 psychiatric beds."

23,800 students and 787 professors, 1730 scientific staff and 2134 administrative and technical staff qualify KU as "the largest university of the country and one of the largest in Europe." There are "11 faculties, 3 equivalent institutes, 49 fields of study, and 110 postgraduate specializations."

On the concluding day the business session was held. I sat quietly watching how earthly these learned professors could get when it came to elections. Some complained that the President was an autocrat. The question of deciding the venue of the next Symposium was a matter of dispute. Some wanted it in the East like Beirut or Bagdad. Finally Cambridge, England was chosen for 1992.

On Wednesday 31 August the delegates who were to attend the Christian Arabic Studies were transported in two buses to Louvain-la-Neuve after supper. The rest of us had marching orders for the next morning. Thus on Sept. 1, I left Louvain, Belgium in the morning and flew back from Amsterdam airport, Holland the same evening. Thus ended my only foreign trip of 1988.

CHAPTER IX

IVth VISIT TO HOLLAND

The flight reached Amsterdam early in morning ahead of the schedule. As I reached the baggage area, I saw a bearded man waving me from outside. I guessed it would be Mr. Duyn who was to be my host in Holland. This was the first time I was seeing my host who was not known to me, except through the telephonic calls and correspondence. Although I was not sure whether he was waving at me or some other passengers, I waved back after looking around to see whether anybody else was waving at the bearded man.

After collecting my *sitar* which was coming through the conveyer belt in an upside down position, I grabbed it quickly and walked to the man I thought was my host. I was glad to find I was not mistaken. It was easy for him to recognize me as I was the only Indian arriving in that flight. I thanked Mr. Duyn who came with his second daughter Miranda to meet me and drive me to his home. I had offered to go

his hometown by train and bus so that he could avoid such an early morning trip. But Mr. Duyn did not consider it a trouble to arrive at the airport early in the morning.

We talked on the way. The roads were quiet as people were only getting up from their beds. We reached the small town of Eefde close to the German border to where Mr. Duyn had shifted recently. It was nice to be in the home of David, a boy from the Mar Thimotheus Memorial Orphanage, Kalathode, Trichur - 680 655, Kerala, where my mother Mrs. J. D. Mooken had taken care of him. David was adopted by the Duyn family and now he is the legal son of the Duyn family which has two teenage daughters. The colour of the skin of David is different from that of his two elder sisters. But the colour of skin does not bother anyone of the family members.

It was difficult for David to get adjusted to the home. When he arrived in Amsterdam at the age of three the Duyn family took delivery of the baby from the escort. David looked around and kept quiet. There were people around him, none of whom he could recognize. None of them could communicate with him. David knew no English or Dutch. The Duyns

knew no Malayalam. There was no interpreter around. No computer or cassette could assist to make this transition easy.

There is an audio cassette tape of the evening of the airport and his first night at the Duy home. This tape tells us the early hours of David, the Indian boy in an alien land. I took a copy it, as it is interesting hearing to me. It is surprising to know how quickly David learned the language without an interpreter. I would have demanded an interpreter to be made available. David was not old enough to make such demands. He learned Dutch and English the hard way. He easily forgot his Malayalam.

After a few minutes of surprise at the airport David uttered his first words in the land of adoption in his mother tongue, *Caru Van* which means car came. The father asked what *Caravannu?* David repeated *Caru Vannu* pointing at the car. Then the father said this was not *caravannu*. This was auto. Then David made the noise of starting an *autorikshaw*, the three-wheeler taxi, a cheaper one available in India.

When David reached home he was hungry. He demanded *paappam* which meant bread. The mother called her husband and said that David

was calling *Papa*. When the father came he repeated his demand *paapam*. Mr. Duyn said he himself was the *papa*. The son was not satisfied with his reply. Finally they moved to the dining table. While the parents and the two daughters were discussing the meaning of the word *paappam*, David looked at the bread on the table and announced triumphantly *ithu paappam*. This (is) bread. Thus David taught his parents Malayalam language. Then he submitted his next demand "*Pottichu tharanam*." "What? *Pochittu tharanam*?" David did not answer his father who could not even repeat such a simple word properly. Although David repeated his demand again and again with a louder voice, none in the family could get any clue to its meaning.

After food he announced *mullanam*. It means that he wanted to urinate. The family members began to imagine the possible meaning of his latest demand, *mullanam*. Someone suggested that perhaps he wanted to go to the bath room. Then he spent a few minutes in silence. Finally he gave up Malayalam and recited a b c d e f g in English. The practical wisdom of the three year old Indian boy made him to recite the few letters in English; when he realised that the members of his new home were ignorant of a single word in Malayalam.

The audio tape tells us only the words uttered. The words he could not utter speak volumes of the feelings of this little boy who he found himself in a strange land. But he was no stranger. He was not unwanted. He was loved and kissed by the members of the Duyn family. David is proud of his new surname Duyn. He points out the building where legal sanction was granted to him for the use of the name Duyn. Now he is a legal heir of the Duyn family just like his two elder sisters.

It was not David alone who was happy; the four members of the Duyn family were ecstatic to have a smart little youngster in the family fold. How adoptions have helped European and American families is beyond description. Although complaints are heard occasionally in India about adoption of babies by foreigners, my information is that as a whole foreigners have no complaints in this area of international adoptions. They are not happy about the delay in obtaining a baby from India. It takes about a year to finalise the legal requirements. The legal process is very slow and tediously dilatory in India. The judges often postpone the hearing of such cases. Then court vacations of several weeks are granted for summer and Christmas. There are always emergency ca

uch as murder etc. and therefore adoption cases are not dealt with as expeditiously as foreign parents want.

During my stay of two days at Eefde in the Duyn home, Mr. Ate Duyn took me around to see places. Eefde is not a big city. But there are some historic sites around. We went to see the museum and some old Churches. People often use bicycles to save gasoline (petrol) and diesel. They have developed cars which run on gas. Many cars carry a gas cylinder which looks like cooking gas cylinder. When I noticed a fire extinguisher like the ones we find in public auditoriums etc in India, I realised that it was necessary to have such fire extinguishers because we were sitting on a gas cylinder which could catch fire during an accident. I guess gas could be more dangerous than the petrol or diesel. Anyhow it is cheaper. Such alternative fuel is necessary as there is shortage of gasoline or diesel. As petrol is not produced in Holland, they are wiser to be free from over dependence on oil producing Arab countries.

Dr. Bernard Peters is my neighbour in Trichur who has been living in Hengeloo, not far from Eefde where I was staying. Although I had not taken his telephone number I remembered the name of the town and hence I thought

that it was easy to obtain his number from Directory Information. But the problem was that there were more than one Dr. Bern Peters in that town. Finally my host managed to get one number and tried it. When I heard "hello", at the other end as soon as we dialled I easily recognized that it was an Indian voice. By looking at a man we can identify that he is an Indian. But even without seeing a man in a telephone talk we can guess somewhat whether he is an Indian on the other end. It was not "Bernie" on the phone; but his son Raju. Since I did not know him I told him that I am the next door neighbour of his father in Trichur. To the young man Holland is his home, India is his parent's country. The young man instantly invited me to stay at his home. While thanking him for the invitation I promised to visit there during some future trip.

Mr. Duyn plays the piano accordion. He is an expert repairer of that musical instrument. It is his hobby and, I think, a source of supplementary income. When I played "Jingle bells....." etc on my *sitar* he took his accordion and accompanied my music. To my great pleasant surprises, the five year old Indian boy David took his baby accordion and began

play it just like his father. In the pictures printed at the end of this book there is a photograph of that rare moment when the three of us play "Jingle bells" together. I have an audio cassette of that rare symphony of *sitar* and accordion.

As I had decided to write this travelogue I wanted to learn more about Holland and its people. Though Mr. Duyn and his family had only scanty knowledge of the English language I besieged them with questions: Still I think the Dutch people speak English better than the Germans. I may be wrong in making such sweeping generalisation from the little knowledge I have of both Germany and Holland.

One evening the two grand mothers of David came to see me. Both ladies seemed to be proud of their adopted grandson David. As far as my knowledge goes the relatives of parents who have adopted children of Indian are happy. Although the colour of the skin is dark, they love the children from India. In general, I am told, the Indian children are brilliant and do well in school.

I went to the kindergarten school where David was studying. His mother takes him on

her bicycle what the Americans call a push bike. In India we simply call it "cycle". Cycling is a good physical exercise. I never had diabetes when I was using a cycle. Using a motor cycle after becoming bishop is a major cause of diabetes.

The children as well as the teacher David's class was happy to see me, a visitor from India, which was a new event in the school. David was proud when I played sitar for the children in the class. Some of the class mates asked me questions about India. My visit was interesting as well as informative to them.

My next destination was Belgium. I have written about it in the last two chapters. My stay with the Duyn family was from August 20th Tuesday morning to 26th Friday morning. During the three days we tried to see as much as we could. But I used to take rest in the afternoon as I had Belgium also to visit in this trip. I do not want to be sick by straining myself too much.

After my Sojourn in Belgium, (August 26th) Peter Ultee took me by car from Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium to his home in Aardenburg, Holland.

early in the morning on Sept. 1. Thus after six days I was back in Holland. My itinerary was so packed that Mr. Ultee had to make an early morning start from his home in Holland to Belgium and take me back to Holland for breakfast. We passed through important places such as the capital of Belgium. Roads were crowded with cars of people going to work in the morning.

The Ultees had adopted Joyce from the M.T.M. Orphanage, Trichur. Peter Ultee and his wife had a son, but wanted a girl and thus adopted this girl after much waiting, as the Agency which originally had promised them a baby was closed down. The perseverance of the Ultees paid their dividends and they added a baby girl to their family. They were so happy and grateful. Since Mr. Ultee had personally come to Trichur to take the baby to Holland, we talked about the orphanage. I ate a lot of cheese at his home without worrying about the cholesterol which I later regreted when I realised that the cholesterol had increased considerably.

Peter Ultee owns two coffee factories. I think he buys coffee beans and powders it and supplies to coffee shops. He has a big house. In front of his home there is a flag mast. The

Indian flag was on that day in my honour. I do not know how many flags he has. His hunting dog began to bark when it saw me, a stranger, in the house!

Despite the fear of the dog I had, I was quite impressed by the warmth of friendship Ultees showed to a stranger who did not spend even a couple of hours in their house. Although Peter Ultee offered to drive me to Amsterdam airport as I had to catch the KLM flight that evening to Delhi, I did not let him take that much trouble for me. Still he took me in his car and got into a big boat, as big as a ship. After getting out of the ferry on the other end, we walked to the railway station. He purchased me a first class ticket to the Amsterdam airport and put me in the train.

I was tired after the busy ten days in Holland and Belgium. I lay down in the train comfortably as there was nobody in that compartment. It was raining outside. With three or four hours of journey passing through the Hague, Rotterdam etc. I got out of the train at the airport station, one stop before the centrum. From the railway station it was only a stone's throw away to the airport and I walked across. No taxi, no porter. How convenient it would be in India if we had railway stations next to the airports!

pp. 117-124 Photographs

1. **London,** Eshaya Chemmani and brother Youvel with cousin James in the middle.
2. Children of Chemmani brothers and cousin
3. Dr. N. V. George, Mrs. Susheela George, Dr. Sheena George, Maya George with Dr. George's niece and family in London.
4. **Luton, England.** Left to Right: Mrs. Susheela George, Mar Aprem, Mrs. T. K. Jose and son, with Dr. N. V. George.
5. **Rugby, England.** Mar Aprem's sister's five children Varkey, Honey, Dr. Sheena, Maya and Poopa.
6. **California.** Mar Aprem conducted Qurbana in St. Mary's Church, Hughson near Turlock, Calif.
7. **Minneapolis.** Polly Rueling's adopted daughters Unny Mary and Alice with Mar Aprem.
8. **Chicago.** Cindy & Al Parry, Mar Aprem, John, Ryan & Kala (Margaret) Parry. Eleanor Thomasula with Anne.
9. Paul & Eleanor Thomasula with their adopted children Ann and John for Christmas 1988.

10. **Chicago.** St. Odisho Church in No. Pulaski Road. Mar Narsai Metropoli with Rev. Awiqam Pithyon and four deacons (Odisho, Youkhanna, Daniel, Edward.)
11. **Ann Arbor.** Mar Aprem reminds his niece Grace Mary that once upon a time he was a baby sitter in Princeton. Addiso Mookan looks on.
12. **Bowling Green, Ohio.** Dr. Davy Emma with his wife Gracy and daughter Li. Mar Aprem's sister Leela and Addiso's wife Molly are on the right. Addiso's children Aprem and Grace Mary in the front.
13. **New York.** Geevarghese Emmatty, wife Thankamma and daughter with Dennis Johnson, the tennis Champion from Trichur.
14. **Valsan Thermadom,** wife Marykutty and two daughters with Mrs. Geevarghese Emmatty and two daughters and neighbour's daughter Mini.
15. **Holland.** Peter Ultee with the adopted daughter from Trichur.
16. **Holland.** Ate Duyn and David with pianos and accordians accompanying Mar Aprem playing sitar.

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Mrs. Shirin Yosep Kallu of Jelu, aged 116
(Read pages 42 and 43)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



The Most Rev. Dr. Mar Aprem (formerly George Mookken) was born in Trichur, Kerala, India, in June 1940. Educated in India, England and America, he specialised in the field of Church History. He was the president of the Church History Association of India.

Since 1968 he is the head of the Church of the East in India with his headquarters in Trichur. He is active in several religious and social organizations, all over India.

The author has read papers in academic conferences such as Symposium Syriacum in Goslar, West Germany in September 1980 and Holland in September 1984, and International Congress on Oriental Canon Law in Freiburg, West Germany in September, 1983.

His biography appears in the *International Who's Who of Intellectuals*, Vol. 6 Cambridge, The *International Directory of Distinguished Leadership*, First Edition, U. S. A. and others.

He was given 'Men of Achievement' Award of the International Biographical Centre, Cambridge, England, in 1984 and the 'Medal of Merit' of the Coptic Orthodox Cultural Centre, Venice for his cultural and ecumenical achievements.